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402 Lillieclaf; or, Passages in the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland of Sunnyside. By Mrs. Oliphant.....	20		
403 An English Squire. C. R. Coleridge.....	20		
404 In Durance Vile, and Other Stories. By "The Duchess"...	10		

BOULDERSTONE

OR

NEW MEN AND OLD POPULATIONS

A NOVEL

BY WILLIAM SIMES

NEW YORK

GEORGE WOOD & SONS

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OR,

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By WILLIAM SIME.



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BERNSTONE

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CHAPTER I

THE FIRST

It was a fine day, and the sun was shining brightly. The birds were singing, and the flowers were in bloom. The children were playing in the garden, and the old man was sitting on the bench, looking at them with a smile. The old man was a kind and gentle soul, and he loved to see the children happy. He had been married for many years, and his wife had died. He was now alone, but he did not feel lonely. He had his garden, and his children, and his memories of his wife. He was a good man, and he was loved by all who knew him. The children were playing for hours, and the old man was watching them with a heart full of love. The sun was setting, and the sky was a beautiful shade of orange. The children were tired, and they were all sitting on the grass, looking up at the sky. The old man was holding a book, and he was reading to them. The children were listening intently, and they were all smiling. The old man was a good storyteller, and he was telling them a story about a prince and a princess. The children were captivated by the story, and they were all holding their breath. The old man was looking at them, and he was smiling. The children were all looking at him, and they were all smiling. The old man was a good man, and he was loved by all who knew him. The children were playing for hours, and the old man was watching them with a heart full of love. The sun was setting, and the sky was a beautiful shade of orange. The children were tired, and they were all sitting on the grass, looking up at the sky. The old man was holding a book, and he was reading to them. The children were listening intently, and they were all smiling. The old man was a good storyteller, and he was telling them a story about a prince and a princess. The children were captivated by the story, and they were all holding their breath. The old man was looking at them, and he was smiling. The children were all looking at him, and they were all smiling. The old man was a good man, and he was loved by all who knew him.

BOULDERSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN JANSEN.

PERHAPS the hardest thing in the world for an active man is to settle down to doing nothing. Certainly Captain John Jansen, at the end of his year's residence on the banks of the Boulder, began to feel that being at complete leisure was not half so nice a thing as he had anticipated during thirty years of sea-faring. Many a time when his bark was putting her head into the spray, and in the darkness of the night he tramped between the wheel and the deck-house, he had told himself that things might be different with him. He had been a prosperous man, as prosperity counts among sailors. In his native town of Boulderstone he was regarded as a substantial person of property. Boy and man, Jansen had always turned up at Boulderstone when his voyages were over; and as the years went by, the quidnuncs were aware that he had a good standing account at the bank, that he had shares in the gas company recently started, and that the ship he sailed was three parts his own. Such being the case, it was no more than natural that when his bark was heading through the North Sea in a murky night, and there was not even a star to show him his bearings, every now and then the raw, cold edge of a wave coming on board to hit him on the face, Captain Jansen should think how different it might be with him if he liked.

On the banks of the Boulder he had a cottage of his own, where, in the dark evenings, he knew he could draw his curtains together and enjoy the blaze of his log fire in comfort and dryness. The picture of that cottage haunted his imagination for several voyages. He saw it in the night watches when the mate thrust his voice into his slumbers to tell him there was a full gale coming down, and they must bring in the top-sails. It was a sign, he thought, that old age was arriving, a sign that he resented; but the more the hardships of rough weather asserted themselves, the more he saw himself inside the cottage, his curtains drawn, and no more voyages to make. Thus it came about that, returning from the Baltic, he parted with his shares in his bark and returned in his haste for leisure to Boulderstone, and after a year of it he was the most restless man in the country-side.

It was all such a change to him. Everything was always so square and stationary within the cottage from the first day. It presented not a single incident from morning to night. He got out

of bed and through his dressing without as much as a lurch to this side or that. And he missed the sensation, for his dressing in the morning used to be like a fight with some invisible imp who kept snatching his garments here and there. He never knew how much he liked it all, however, till he exchanged his "bunk" for a bedroom, and opened his eyes each morning on motionless furniture, without a creak or a sound in it. He did all he could to be contented too; but he was not an old enough man to take the change with complete gratitude. Having seen things at such a variety of angles on board his ship, he required time to accommodate himself to the ordinary horizontal. By the time he had got used to having his coffee unspilled, his meat without one or two preliminary rolls on the floor, and his crockery unbroken, he had his grievances on hand. There was nothing for him to do but to stroll to the bank-head of the river mouth, tap the barometer, look across the bay, criticise the ships in the offing with some old sailors seated in the shelter, and return again to his cottage to look down at the stream which flowed past the bottom of his garden. At least he thought there was nothing, which was much the same thing.

It was autumn at Boulderstone, and the captain was sitting in his garden, less appreciative of the mildness which was still in the weather than he might have been. The captain's cottage was on the Arcadian side of the town—the side, that is, which had been built on a line with the river, a residence on the river-side being the last stage of respectability reached by the successful ones of the burgh. Just at the point where his garden rose from the banks the river took a wide sweep, so that, the tide being in, it looked more like an estuary than a stream. In truth, as the captain stood by his porch enveloping his own head in clouds of smoke from a pipe with a gigantic bowl, there was far more estuary than stream about it. Half a dozen cobbles, full of boys who had somehow got a hold of them after the salmon-fishers had gone ashore, were racing each other in front of his parapet. Captain Jansen looked on in silence, took a turn up and down the shingle, walked to the bottom of the garden, and sat down on the parapet, smoked harder than ever, and most fervently wished himself at sea again. At that moment he was sick of leisure, and would have given anything to be standing on the hurricane deck of his bark, the white-crested rollers careering to right and to left of him, while he roared his orders up the mizzen-mast to the prehensile men clinging to the shrouds. To look at Captain Jansen, it was, indeed, little wonder that he should be regretting his life of activity. He was fifty, certainly, but any man half his age might have envied the brightness of his gray eye, the freshness of his olive-tinted cheeks, the agility of his walk, and the neatness of his apparel. A stranger on seeing him would have been apt to credit him with the possession of some care-taking wife who expended all her loving energy upon his clothes and his food. But the captain had no wife. He had taken care of himself all his days, and the habit of "nattiness" had come to him with his sea training. Jean Scott, his housekeeper, took it on herself to see that he was as well cared for as if he had a wife. And it was one of Jean's chief objects in life to maintain the captain in a wifeless condition.

He was still keeping watch at his parapet when at the side gate, which led by a graveled walk to his front door, a noise of dogs attracted his attention. On the inside of the gate, Oscar, his large black retriever, was answering with his deep bass voice certain short, sharp sounds that were being issued from the outside. "Gae wa' in wi' ye, Oscar, man," Jean Scott was saying, as she shook her apron at the elephantine gambols of the retriever. "It's that crater frae the schule-hoose."

"No, he's no in," Captain Jansen heard her exclaiming with the most brazen effrontery, while she made a vain endeavor with her foot to check the entrance of a blue Skye terrier.

"Hey there! What is that you're saying, Jean?" shouted the captain from the bottom of the garden.

"Gude sake, the captain's in the gairden. I'll tak ony message till'm ye'll gie me."

By this time the retriever and the terrier were performing mad circles among the flower-beds, and exchanging the wildest manifestations of friendship; and the captain himself was half-way up the walk.

"Thank you, Jean," said a pleasant voice from the outside; "I think I hear Captain Jansen. My message is rather long to deliver at the outside of the gate."

"Come awa' in, then," said Jean, whose detected prevarication did not in the least humble her. And a tall girl stepped past the housekeeper to meet the captain, whose brown cheeks became flushed as he quickened his pace to meet her.

"I'm sorry, ma'am, you've been kept standing," said Captain Jansen, saluting as if he had seen a commodore.

"Jean doesn't like me," the girl remarked loud enough for the housekeeper to hear.

"Oh, I've naething against ye," said Jean, with a snort of contempt, as she disappeared, while the captain stood bashfully on the walk to hear what the girl had to say.

"It's a long story, Captain Jansen," and she smiled on him out of her clear, deep eyes, while the sun lighted up her golden hair. It was Bertha St. Clair, the school-mistress, who spoke, and the captain, recovering himself, asked if she would step inside.

"No, thank you, Captain Jansen; I think I could explain it all to you at the parapet better than in the house."

And the captain led the way to the parapet, where he felt in an abstracted way the contents of his waistcoat pockets.

"It isn't a subscription," said Bertha, gently; "at least, not yet."

Captain Jansen withdrew his fingers, smiling.

"You will think me impertinent at first," pursued Bertha.

"Not a bit of it, ma'am."

"You will think me impertinent and interfering, for I am going to ask you to do something which is business, and the parish minister has just told me that if I attend to my school I have more than enough on my hands."

"You've a good deal on your hands, ma'am," said the captain, admiringly.

"Yes; but I can't help coming to you, Captain Jansen, and sug-

gesting what looks like an impertinence. I want you to interest yourself in some people I am too poor to help."

The captain saw his way, and pledged himself at once.

"That I will, right gladly."

Miss St. Clair's lip quivered a little, and her eyes moistened as she paused to swallow a lump in her throat.

"Thank you, Captain Jansen," she replied, hurriedly. "I knew I should have your help; and, believe me, I think you will never regret giving it as long as you live. Well, you remember the great storm of the 18th, that so many people have suffered by?"

"I do."

"And what you don't know is that, if something isn't done, several families in the Fisher Biggins will starve in a few months' time."

The captain pushed back his hat reproachfully, asking,

"What can we do, ma'am?"

"You can't keep all these families, Captain Jansen, and I know you've been giving them half their keep for some weeks past."

"Not I, indeed, ma'am," said the captain, quickly. "I haven't given them a farthing's worth."

"No, but you haven't taken a farthing for their rents, which is the same thing. But something must be done for them. You know that the four best boats on the shore were wrecked, and the fragments of them have kindled their fires. We must get them new boats, or the men will go about in idleness, and their wives and children starve. And the business I am going to propose to you is this—you are to buy the boats for them, Captain Jansen."

"Do you know the price of one of them boats and the gear, ma'am?"

"Yes, I have found out all the prices. They are here," replied Bertha, bringing a formidable document from her pocket. "It will take some hundred pounds to buy and equip each boat."

"That's a lot of money, ma'am."

"Yes, but you are not to give the boats to the people. You are to own them, and let them have shares in them; and when they can buy them you will sell them."

"It's a new thing to put out money in that way. It may be £1600 of it, ma'am; you'll have to give me a little time to turn it all over. The people sha'n't starve, but I'll have to get time to think over it."

A look of doubt and pain passed over Bertha's face. She had convinced herself that her scheme would be as apparent to Captain Jansen as to herself. His hesitation seemed to raise new difficulties in her way.

"But it is not a new scheme, Captain Jansen. It has been tried on the Frith of Forth, and it has succeeded. This letter will explain everything to you better than I can."

"I'm sure, ma'am, it is all right if you say it; but, look you, £1600 is no trifle to the like o' me. Not but what I can make up that amount at a pinch, and maybe as much more again to that, and not but what I would make it up if you think the money well put out. Only give me a day or two, and keep your own counsel,

ma'am. If there's no other way out of the difficulty, we'll try it; but a little time will do nobody any harm."

"Captain Jansen," said Bertha, eagerly, "I knew you would not refuse to help me; and though I must—even to you—look both bold and impertinent—"

"Stow that, ma'am," interrupted the captain, earnestly. "Impertinence from you is a mighty sight nicer than other people's respect."

"You will understand," proceeded the girl, rapidly, "that it is for the sake of people who will starve and die if they are not given a chance to live."

"I know, I know," said the captain, looking at her respectfully, with the slightest intonation of tenderness in his voice.

And that night, as Captain Jansen blew out his lamp and turned on his pillow to sleep, he forgot for the first time for months his grievances and longings, and murmured, "So, I am to be a boat proprietor, am I?"

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER AND SON.

CONTINENTAL Europe is the playground of the moneyed classes of Great Britain, but it is also sometimes their place of refuge. All over the warm and sunny nooks of the Mediterranean English faces are to be seen upon balconies which command peeps of the blue sea, are to be found in gardens where the statues are lithe and strange, are not to be met among the pillars of little cathedral churches where a great master has left a divine face upon a canvas on the wall. But few of the wanderers turn up at Palermo, for it is off the beaten track; having got as far south as Naples, the majority bethink themselves that it is time to turn their faces northward again. Reaching Naples, they begin to hear of the brigands in Calabria and Sicily, and having no mind to pay ransoms, they do not avail themselves of the excellent steamboat which plies between the two most superb bays of the south. How was it that Lady Dutton and her son, Sir Neil, had pushed so far south in the autumn of —? They are sitting at an open balcony of a window in the Trinacria Hotel this September evening. Besides themselves there is nobody in the hotel who professes to speak English; they are, indeed, the only English people there. Palermo evenings are never chilly; but Lady Dutton is, or chooses to think she is, an invalid; and the environment of warm wraps that confine her to her chair as she looks out on the bay, dotted with numerous ships, seems to justify the pretension. And the look on the young man's face who is leaning his shoulder against the framework of the window, while he runs his finger through the leaves of a mock plant trailing down the wall, is one of tender solicitude, as if there were no doubt about it. No one who examined the face of Lady Dutton could, however, have supposed that there was much the matter with her. There are lines on the low brow on which her perfectly black hair is braided, but they tell less of physical pain than of mental anxiety. In her keen black eyes there is no trace of the

weariness which carries such people south. They turned from the son's face to the bay and back again with an impenetrable shrewdness. Lady Dutton was a widow of four months' standing, and her widowhood was perhaps the strongest justification for the attitude and demeanor of sickness. At any rate, she needed some such plea to keep her son by her side, and to retain him in an affectionate humor. Not that Sir Neil Dutton was in the habit of venting ill-humor upon his mother, or that she needed the plea of weakness to protect herself against a fault of temper on his part. As the tall young baronet leans by the side of the window and fastens his eyes upon his mother's face, it is plain enough that whatever he is he is not ill-humored. Yet she requires to shield herself against his criticism, for during the last week or two there has been much to explain to him, and it seems only natural to her that his surprise at some of the explanations should take an irritating turn now and again.

"Then it comes to this, mother," Sir Neil was saying at the window, "that we have got to Palermo more on account of poverty than anything else. If we had had the old income coming in, you would still have been at Rome; but the expenses at Rome are too heavy for the family purse. The air of the Bay of Palermo had very little to do with the change."

"Pardon me, Neil," said Lady Dutton, "it was not poverty that drove us here. It was the air of the Bay of Palermo recommended to me by Dr. Negretti, and nothing else. To use the word poverty at all is quite too absurd. We are in temporary difficulties. We are not poor."

"Call it affluence if you like, my dear mother," responded Sir Neil, tossing a five-franc piece in the air; "call it affluence, but it seems to me to closely resemble what other people would call poverty."

"My dear son, you take far too dark a view of things. You have been surprised. Your surprise will wear off and in a short time all will come right again. The estates are mortgaged, it is true, and just when your poor father is taken away from us our income seems to stop. It is not really so; the estates are there all the same. When the lawyers have talked it over I dare say everything will come right. You must really be more cheerful for my sake."

Sir Neil shifted his position at the window, and straightening himself, showed a somewhat slender figure, stooping at the shoulders, with a head of noble frankness, the face pale, but the dark eyes lit up by a soft kindness of expression which contrasted with the hardness of glance conspicuous in his mother.

"You know," he said, "it isn't the poverty or the embarrassment I am thinking about. It's the years of anxiety that must have preceded the embarrassment. This mortgaging of Boulderstone has not all happened in a day. It has been going on all my time, and before it, yet I have heard nothing of it. On the contrary, I have always had more money than I needed, though I have taken very good care to spend it. What pains me is to think that for the last four years I have been living at the rate of two thousand a year, while our affairs were practically going to the dogs."

Lady Dutton shivered a little and wrapped herself more snugly

in her lounge. "Have some pity on me, Neil," she said, imploringly. "Your father, even when conscious of his embarrassments, never allowed himself to talk about his affairs in that strain. But he was so good and gentle," she added, in a murmur, which had the double effect of becoming her widowhood and of rebuking her son.

The air which came in from the bay was soft and fresh, but Sir Neil volunteered to shut it out if his mother felt it chilly. No, Lady Dutton would like to see the sun going down behind Monte Pellegrino. Besides, the evening air was the sovereign remedy of the place.

"Yes, he was good and gentle," repeated Sir Neil, leaning again at the window, his eye wandering into the horizon and detecting the smoke of a steamboat in the furthest line of distance, where the sea and sky seemed to join.

"You say it as if he were neither," said his mother, glancing wearily at him.

"No, mother, you mistake me; but I have just been thinking I never knew him. These four years back I have not spent as many days with him. I took up the foolish fancy that my presence irritated him, and as he said nothing to induce me to come back to Boulderstone, London, or Edinburgh, I kept out of the way since I left Oxford. I have been at Paris to-day, Vienna to-morrow, Rome the next. I did not even chronicle my movements always. It was a selfish life, wholly selfish; but I had no idea how utterly selfish it has been."

"Poor, dear Sir Neil was not very careful, however," interpolated Lady Dutton, now that her son was relapsing into a dangerously desponding tone of conversation. "Of course, I had no idea all these years that he was borrowing upon the estates so liberally—no idea whatever; but I did think that his 'fads' were quite too expensive. You can't think how much money he threw away upon mere trifles. There was the Pictish ruin, don't you know. Well, it was no sooner dug out of its mold of earth than your poor father must get a professional antiquary from Edinburgh. He lived at Boulderstone for six months, deciphered a few griffins on the stones, delved up the boat of a viking, and took so many photographs that our eyes were worn out looking at them. He next induced your father to publish a magnificent edition of a volume upon the ruin, which was gorgeously bound and presented to hundreds of different families. It was Sir Neil's boast that every library in the world contained a copy of the ruins."

The son smiled faintly as he interrupted his mother to say, "And another antiquary from Glasgow demolished the folio in a pamphlet which cost nothing."

"Possibly," said Lady Dutton; "and Sir Neil, you know, had always a craze for freeing people from things. I'm sure I think how many precious thousands it must have taken him to free people from things. His craze—I am sure," said the widow, tenderly, "I may call it a craze—for oppressed races cost him many, many thousands. He kept two secretaries, who made cuttings each day about the Maories, the Saskatchewanes, the Roumanians, and the Poles. He has left you volumes, Neil, that he hoped you might be

able to publish after him. You can see that you have not been the only one to spend money. And then the inventions he bought and adopted. At the Home Farm, the factor told me there were hundreds of pounds of old iron and steel, originally inventions."

"And not to know of all this, mother. Can't you see how it vexes me that we should never have understood each other better—my father and I? I might have helped him in his later days; but instead of that I have been going all over Europe, from library to library, from opera-house to opera-house, from one bright set of men and women to another bright set further off, living for the enjoyment and the cultivation of self. And this is what it has all come to. You and I are sitting at a balcony in Palermo, banished from Europe, you may say, because we have not the means of appearing in society. We are taking refuge in the cheapest *Ultima Thule*, except our own Boulderstone, that we can find. Here we are, in debt to our very boot-maker, tailor, and milliner; and here, more particularly, I am in my six-and-twentieth year, without a profession, without a prospect of a career. I had better shave my mustache and razor the crown of my head and join the Dominicans of Conca d'Oro."

Lady Dutton looked at her son with a glance of mingled affection and displeasure. "You forget, my son, that if you have no profession, you are Sir Neil Dutton of Boulderstone. At the next election you may, if you like, become Sir Neil Dutton, M.P. You are young; you have your mother's face; you may marry whom you choose. In Rome there are half a dozen American girls who are quite too eager to have your society. In London you can do better still."

"For God's sake, mother, don't speak as if marriage were a profession!"

"Son, it is much better than a profession. Be advised by me, and you shall marry Boulderstone out of its mortgages. You shall marry, Sir Neil Dutton, into a career. And you shall marry the Dowager Lady Dutton into a background which shall not be more contemptible than that occupied by those of her kind."

Sir Neil looked at his mother sadly, feeling in his heart that if his father did not know him, neither assuredly did his mother.

"After all, mother," he added, in a lower tone of voice, "when we have got that final statement of affairs from Edinburgh, and if it is not bankruptcy we have to face, I can get my living myself, I believe."

"Get your living!" said Lady Dutton, rising from her couch with a gesture as unlike that of an invalid as it could well be. "Get your living! Why, of course you shall. But you shall get it as your father, and your father's father, and his ancestors before him have got it. It shall be as the head of your house and as lord of your own manor. Neil, I am almost ashamed of you," she said, gathering up her dress, and pacing slowly along the polished oak of the uncarpeted floor.

The young man hardly turned to look after her. Within a few weeks the whole aspect of the world seemed to have changed for him. The step from opulence to necessity had been as rude an eye-opener as the unexpected death of his father. His father's death

had always been a possibility to which he was called to look forward. It was the thing that had to happen some time, and his father being but little to him in life, he was able to bear his removal with a contemplative sadness which was swiftly its own cure. The arrival of poverty was a blow of another kind altogether. He had never hitherto conceived poverty, except in the abstract—as a kind of negative state, which had rags and hunger as its positive accompaniments. It had not gone so far as that yet—it might never go so far; but, at any rate, he had reason to dread the appearance of the next hotel bill, so low were the funds at his disposal. Besides, Sir Neil Dutton had occupied his mind with other thoughts than pounds, shillings, and pence. He had busied himself with speculations about European policy, with schemes of a course of philosophy of the universe, with some of the poetry and prose of at least six literatures, and with the art of six peoples, and it came hard to him to substitute for these higher objects the paltry worries entailed in watching the passing away of five-franc pieces. For a week or two there was a slight novelty in it, but the novelty died away when he found himself walking miles where he would otherwise have ridden, smoking inferior cigars when he would otherwise have indulged in the best, receiving looks of contempt from menials whose smiles he would otherwise have bribed. He was still leaning at the balcony when, to his surprise, he saw Lady Dutton cross the Marina and stoop to kiss a little woman who had just ascended the steps from the bay. Close by a steam-yacht had cast anchor. The ladies were unaccompanied. Sir Neil stepped down to meet them.

CHAPTER III.

BERTHA ST. CLAIR AT WORK.

THE “charity school” of Boulderstone was not the chief educational establishment of the place. It was a very primary affair indeed, at the end of a lane by itself, one half of its diamond-paned windows looking out upon the currant-bushes of Lucky Draver, who kept two cows, and was esteemed to have a stocking somewhere in her floor or ceiling; the other half upon the lane itself. The “parish school” was a more imposing edifice in a part of the town where there was more life and bustle, and its benches were crowded by taller boys and girls than frequented “the charity.” The morsels who conveyed themselves on their small legs to “the charity” had but little literature to carry with them, and most of that within paper covers merely. They had not reached the dignity of straps to tie round them; and indeed they only went there at all as long as they were very small and ignorant. Having got an insight into things deep enough to enable them to read words of two syllables and to do sums in substraction, they were free to make their way to the “parish school,” where the soft voice of a school-mistress was exchanged for the harsh tongue of a master in the habit of emphasizing his explanations, remarks, and requests by the rattle of a stout cane. The mistress of “the charity” was Bertha St. Clair. Looking in on an autumn morning, Bertha, book in hand,

might have been seen bending over a line of youngsters, boys and girls, and the rays of the sun lighting up her golden hair. Bobbie North is at the head of the class, and has spelled four words, three syllables in length; and Johnnie Rae is at the bottom, where he always is, having no more conception of the way to put a syllable to a syllable and sound it, all of his own accord, than has the last blue-bottle of the season, who has just flown in at the window, greatly to Johnnie's delight.

"Johnnie, you must keep that little toe of yours to the line," Bertha tells him, "and not turn round and round after that fly. He's a beauty, but he won't teach you to spell like Bobbie North."

Bobbie, who is two inches smaller than Johnnie, glances along the line of the form, and looks patronizingly at the tall booby at the other end, who is secretly making up his mind that he will punch the dux's head as soon as it is time to "skail." Meanwhile, however, he fastens his eyes on his book, and tries to appease the school-mistress, whose good opinion, albeit he is a booby, he values highly.

As Bertha proceeds with the lesson, first one boy with a slate and then another come up from the furthest region of the room, and solicit her attention. They both look profoundly miserable as they stare at the figures in front of them. They have tried the sum every way it will go; but, poor souls, having got 6 and 6 make 12, and 9 to raise it to 21, they have to stop at the difficulty created by an additional 11. The sum is so tremendously top-heavy with an eleven to it that they see no means of arriving at a total.

"Try," says Bertha, beginning an old saw, which a loud voice from the floor catches up and sings lustily to its termination, in "try, try, again."

"Georgie Dunbar, this is not the singing lesson," she tells the boy who is crawling on all fours.

"Oh, oh, oh!" screams a little girl quite close by the spot to which Bertha is devoting her reprimand, and the last "oh" is followed by a hysterical outburst of tears. Bertha moves through the forms from the class and the boys with the slates, and in a twinkling Georgie Dunbar is unearthed from the floor, deposited on the other side of a door, which closes on him abruptly, and the weeping damsel is removed to a place near the fire. A pin has been run into her leg, and five minutes after the drop of red blood, which is the outward token of the wound, has been removed, a gasp, and a sob, and tears still show how painful it has been. Quiet, however, has been restored, Bobbie North is again spelling his way triumphantly through a three-syllable word, and Johnnie Rae is nursing his enmity at the dux; and the arithmeticians in the back corner, in sheer despair, have relapsed into various artistic efforts to produce horses and pigs on their slates; and others are eagerly occupied, and preparing to stand up for a reading, when a great crash from behind the door makes it obvious that Georgie Dunbar is enlivening his imprisonment with experiments. Bertha opens the door, looks in, then shuts it behind her, and her deep, low voice is heard in earnest conversation with the culprit.

But the spirit of St. Vitus or some other saltatory saint immediately gets into the school-room. An ally of Georgie Dunbar's thinks it necessary to sneak round to the fire, and inserting two

fingers into his mouth and two into the corners of his eyes, he makes a hideous face at the little girl whose screams have produced the catastrophe at the other side of the door. Johnnie Rae finds it a capital opportunity for bringing a pointer over the head of the dux; and Billie Barns, who has the face of an Immaculate Conception in Raphael, rushes to overturn a form of rather dirty cherubs behind him. The arithmeticians chase each other round the coal-scuttle and the black-board, whooping like savages, so that, when Bertha opens the door and Georgie Dunbar with his red but penitent eyes emerges, a hand in the hand of his mistress, he looks like a model animal introduced as an example to a caravan of wild ones. As suddenly as the storm arose it dropped again at the sight of the tall figure, and the sweet, strong face. There is an ignominious crawling of the boys beneath forms before there is a perfect readjustment, but by the time Georgie Dunbar has been taken to the fireside to shake hands with the little girl into whose inoffensive limb he had thrust the pin, there is not a whisper stirring.

“Now, boys and girls, there is Georgie Dunbar come back again, and he is not the same boy who put the pin into Lizzy Gun’s leg. It is a wicked, cruel demon who did that—not this boy. And you are to remember that you are to be kind and loving to each other, not rude and cruel. And big, strong boys like Georgie Dunbar must be good to little girls like Lizzy, who, I’m sure, would not hurt a mouse.”

When the little ones rush screaming into the lane Bertha has time to turn her mind to a more serious part of her day’s work. Properly speaking, her work ought to be done when the small people have escaped: but the school-mistress has taken it on her to teach half a dozen lads what she can of geography, logarithms, and grammar.

Boulderstone as a sea-side town has got a supply of lads who, sooner or later, expect to command ships; and it takes all their knowledge of them and other subjects to give them confidence to stand up in the Board-rooms of Leith and Greenock to answer before examiners for their practical and theoretical seamanship. One of Bertha’s afternoon pupils is thirty at least, and having been all round the world as a boatswain, is anxious to renew his travels in the capacity of mate. To him Bertha has to impart grammar and a knowledge of the globes in the first instance. As he rolls into the little school-room, touching his forelock, his Scandinavian features light up with a respectful smile. He is getting on, having only learned to write six months ago; and as he takes his place in front of a sphere, it is evidently a pleasure to him to be realizing as knowledge what he has seen with his own eyes.

“We’ll take a voyage to-day from the Clyde to Calcutta,” says Bertha, approaching from her black-board, where she has been chalking up a demonstration in geometry for some others of her pupils. “Read me off all the names of the seas as you point out the route to me. We shall go by the Cape of Good Hope, if you please.”

“Well, ma’am, if I shut my eyes I could screed ye off the route sooner than with the globe in front o’ me.”

"Do, Mr. Baikie," said Bertha, "let me hear the route first in that way; then you can compare it with the globe."

And Mr. Baikie had got as far as the Bay of Biscay, and was just being told to begin again and to go over the chief headlands along the Irish Channel, when five other pupils slouched into the room.

"Good-day, ma'am," came from the lips of each as they took their seats, three of them neatly-dressed lads with pilot-jackets, one of them with no jacket at all, only a pair of red cotton straps slung across his shoulders to keep his "pants" from the ground; another—a gnarled, ugly lad of sixteen or thereabouts—having no coat.

Each of them settled down to his task, however, with a look of earnest application that showed how clearly defined an aim he had in being there under the mistress's tuition.

"You have missed three capes, Mr. Baikie," said Bertha to the boatswain, who was slowly humming his way through them in a deep bass voice. "I shouldn't care to be a passenger in your ship that voyage."

Mr Baikie blushed, pushed his hand through his hair, and began again, while Bertha filled in the letters for her demonstration on the black-board; and the five pupils, taking their slates, sat down in front of it in silence. Baikie was then set to writing out the capes, while the others in turn went through their proposition in Euclid.

For two hours it was a scene of silent hard work, and any one who might have chosen to peep through the diamond panes could have done so with impunity, for the six were so preoccupied that they scarcely allowed their eyes to stray from their tasks.

"I think," said Bertha, addressing the three pilot-jacketed lads, "that when you go before the examiners they will admit you know your Euclid at all events. And I'm sure you will all be writing at the end of next month to say that you've passed and got ships."

Three pairs of sparkling eyes were turned on her affectionately, and one of the lads, spokesman for the emotions of his companions, answered,

"It wud be right enough, ma'am, if you was the examiner; but it's a bonny odds o' differ when one o' them shore captains puts the questions. He don't put it to ye to get the answer; he puts it to bamboozle ye like, an' then it all flees away from ye."

"Courage, Jack," said Bertha; "don't be put upon by the shore captains, and you'll certainly pass. Be as cool and collected as you are now, and no fear of you. And Captain Jansen has promised me to tell you all that you are likely to be asked about masts and spars, and steering a course, and taking in and letting out sails."

And just at that moment a knock was heard at the door, and the head of Captain Jansen showed itself inside the school-room. Bertha advanced with a free, open manner to receive him, saying,

"Come in, captain; we were just speaking about you."

"Speak about the—you know who, ma'am, and he'll appear," said the captain. "I wouldn't like to disturb you at duty. How d'ye do, Baikie? Boxing the globes? It's just this," continued Captain Jansen, hat in hand, and addressing Bertha directly, "I've been looking into that matter, and I see my way. I'll see about it at once."

Bertha followed him to the little passage, where he retreated on making his announcement, and her pupils heard her ejaculating, "I knew you would, Captain Jansen," in an emphatic voice.

When she returned to the room her face had a glow of pleasurable excitement on it; and as she dismissed the class it occurred to one of the pupils to remark in the lane that he "wadna wonner if the cap'n married Miss St. Clair."

CHAPTER IV.

BUSINESS.

A WEEK may make a great difference in a young man's life. At any rate it seems as if a week were to make all the difference in the life of Sir Neil Dutton. The last time we saw him he was deep in certain perplexities which were new to him. Before parting with even a silver coin he had to look at both sides of it. The experience had not been unamusing to him when it first came upon him in Rome. It struck him as odd that he should not be able to move from one street to another without interrupting the ordinary current of his thoughts by a reference to small change.

In Paris, Berlin, Vienna, where so much of his previous years had been spent, he had only to dip his fingers into his purse and his moderate wants were at once supplied. If he passed a book-shop where the greatest triumph of English or French literature was lying in its fresh, uncut condition, he had it sent to his rooms without further ado. If he was seized with a desire to be possessed of a bit of antique lace for his mother, he did not stop to higggle over its price. He bought it and posted it to her. If he envied a drinking-cup or a cameo, he was never put to it to consider the ways and means—the drinking-cup and cameo were forthwith added to the swollen stores of bric-à-brac he had accumulated in his wanderings. Since his father's death in the south of France, however, Sir Neil had been abruptly taught that the step between desire and possession is a much longer one when the distance between them is not bridged over with a full purse. At first, as I have said, it amused him to make the discovery; then it bewildered him; then it irritated him, and began to produce those gloomy reveries which to Lady Dutton were so disagreeable. Sir Neil was not naturally addicted to taking dark views of things. His nature always lent itself to the brightest possible outlook under any given circumstances; and since the arrival of the yacht in the bay several things had occurred to lighten the darkness which appeared to hang round his immediate future. Some indication of the change may be gathered from the conversation of the baronet with a small elderly gentleman of fifty or thereabouts, who is facing him on the balcony at sundown. The room stretches in its cool vastness behind them, its walls and ceiling glowing with pastorals which artistic, generous hands had devised for princes before the place became a hotel.

But both men sitting at the window with the open sea before them apparently enjoy the coolness of the scene.

"Then you think," Sir Neil was saying to the little gentleman

opposite, "that on a fair consideration of the circumstances, the Boulderstone property has still a career before it. It is not to be a case of bankruptcy for my mother and myself, and a scramble for a livelihood afterward, handicapped by my father's title?"

"I think, sir, on the contrary," answered the baronet's companion, who had the tips of the fingers of his right hand dovetailed to the tips of the fingers of his left, and who looked over his hands with searching eye upon his questioner, talking at the same time in English which had the slow motion of Scotch, though it wanted words from the vernacular—"I think, sir, on the contrary, that Boulderstone ought to be made to pay its way in such a manner as to reward you with a sufficient income."

"You know so much about these things, Mr. Frazer, that I am inclined to build hope upon your assertions," replied Sir Neil, rising to shake the ashes of his cigar into a lava bowl.

"I have had a good deal of experience in connection with land in Scotland and elsewhere, and from what I know of the circumstances of your property, Sir Neil, I'm perfectly convinced that, with arrangement and care, you might begin to realize an income in the course of the year. Your quarries alone, properly worked, should supply three cities with pavement. It could be done. Don't doubt me; it could be done. Your fisheries should pay—your river fisheries, I mean. With the estates consolidated, and these in working order, a year should be ample to produce a fair income; and you are not extravagant, sir, I can see that—your tastes are simple."

Sir Neil smiled, and involuntarily put his hand into the pocket where his almost empty purse reposed.

"I always understood that I was to have the enjoyment of £8000 a year when I succeeded, and unfortunately I have gone on for some years enjoying about two thousand, not in the least knowing the difficulties of the estates. When you talk of an income—a fair income—what do you exactly mean?"

Mr. Frazer shifted his position in his chair, looked across the blue bay, where his own handsome yacht was lying, and eyed the baronet furtively.

"Well, a fair income in the circumstances, with mortgages over the property, and lawyers threatening foreclosure—a fair income in the circumstances might be the two thousand you enjoyed up to the date of your father's death. In a couple of years, with proper management, you might be making that."

"I wish I understood the details of business better," replied Sir Neil, abstractedly. "You see, for years I've been going on minding other people's business, looking into political situations and social movements, and so forth, while all this has been happening unawares. Had I only devoted one-tenth the time to the work of the estates that I have given to England and Europe at large, I should not now be facing the specter of bankruptcy."

Mr. Frazer shifted his position again, and tried to console Sir Neil by reminding him of what "the poet said" about "the eternal want of pence that vexes public men."

"But the truth of it is I am not a public man," said Sir Neil; "it is a case of want of pence and being an entirely private man."

"But you will be—you will be. I am a little engaged in politics myself, Sir Neil, behind the scenes, and I know what is going on. You will be asked to become a public man, I can assure you."

"You surprise me," said the young man. "I have scarcely made a speech in my life—never a speech of the slightest consequence."

"Nevertheless, sir, there are party managers who have your name, and who look to you as a coming member of Parliament. Your description of Russian institutions in the magazines has raised great hopes."

Sir Neil rose and surveyed his friend from the balcony, and resumed his seat in silence, going off apparently in a reverie. And his reverie Mr. Frazer did not interrupt, though he watched him narrowly. The survey, too, seemed to satisfy him, for Sir Neil returning to active consciousness of things, he rose, held out his hand, and exclaimed,

"You are to take what I tell you kindly, Sir Neil. I know all your circumstances as if I had read them in a book. I know your father's carelessness about money-matters, and how he gradually got the estates involved. I know how every plausible individual with a hobby could get him to open his purse. I have had transactions with him myself, and saw that a child could have duped him in money-matters. You have been 'handicapped,' as you say yourself, just at the very beginning of your career. But you needn't be. Depend upon it, the Boulderstone property is good for all I say it is; it will yield you an income with proper management. Let me ask you to have it managed at once. I will, without hesitation, and believing that the thing will pay, advance as much as will open out the fishery and the quarries; only get a competent person to take things in hand. I could name several in whom you might have perfect confidence. Free your mind of business, then, and go on with your study of politics. Take my word for it, sir, that everything will yet come right. With management, in the course of time you will get back the income you expected to succeed to."

"Thanks, Mr. Frazer. Your words are encouraging. Your belief in the possibilities of Boulderstone, backed by your own offer, satisfies me I have neither bankruptcy nor penury to fear. I can indulge in the luxury of a little self-respect now; I thought there was an end of it a week ago. But the sooner Boulderstone is under the management you suggest the better, and the new plans put into execution. I owe it to you, if you are to take the trouble of working the industries, to name the man or men you spoke of—the sooner the better."

"You give me that power?"

"Certainly," said the baronet.

"Then you will promise me something in return," said Mr. Frazer.

"Good."

"You will drive business from your mind for a fortnight or three weeks, get your mamma to come on board the 'Pert,' and we will go to sea over it."

"Your kindness is more than I can thank you for, Mr. Frazer; but as I have come to Palermo on account of her health, I can't

answer for her being able to go to sea. But we can go down-stairs and sound her on the subject."

When Sir Neil and Mr. Frazer were admitted into the room where Lady Dutton and a young girl were seated, the baronet's mother received the suggestion with a swift, meaning glance at Mr. Frazer.

"You are quite too kind, Mr. Frazer; I have just been telling Caroline how much I envied her the prospect of going out to sea. There is something in the air of Palermo, don't you know, that scarcely seems to agree with me. Dr. Negrett called it bracing: I find it relaxing. I see from 'Murray' that the African 'sirocco' arrives here occasionally. That would kill me outright. I am sure it is providential to be taken out to sea. Then, Neil," she continued, looking up to her son, "you don't find the architecture of Palermo so fascinating as you expected. You have seen all you care about, and don't wish to 'settle down' in your usual way till you have exhausted the place."

"Pay don't consider me in the matter, mother. If you think you can stand a cruise in the Mediterranean, I am willing to go. But Miss Frazer has allowed herself to be so much of a prisoner. Before we go I should like to show her the king's gardens, the Ziza, and Monte Pelegriano, at least."

Mr. Frazer rubbed his hands softly against each other, looking from the baronet to his daughter; and the girl, turning her face to the speaker, said:

"I'm sure I would like to go to the Ziza with Sir Neil."

"Then, child, you shall go to-morrow," said Lady Dutton, "and I shall prepare myself for the sea."

After which, the gentlemen, strolling out on the Marina, lighted cigars, and forgot that they were on one of the loveliest nooks of the earth—on the lip of the Conca d'Oro, which pours its golden fruit upon harbors, and moles lined with palaces, lapped by a blue sea softly breaking in tides of whiteness from the islands beyond. They forgot that they were on the sacred ground of the first civilizers of Europe, because Sir Neil Dutton was full of the new idea that Boulderstone was to be revolutionized, and Mr. Frazer, listening to him, decided that he would make a first-rate son-in-law.

CHAPTER V.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

THE estates which did not pay, and which it was the intention of Mr. Frazer to transform into a dividend-producing territory, lay in Northshire. They stretched seven miles along the banks of the Boulder, and surrounded the town of Boulderstone almost on every side. Near the town itself there were pleasant uplands, on which graziers pastured their cattle, and where snug homesteads, with whitewashed fronts, shone in the sunlight. Looking back from the uplands the scene was one long gray expanse of moor flanked by the abrupt peaks of the hills of a neighboring county. But all through it gleamed the steely water of the Boulder, and here and there was a ridge of whiteness where the river fell over intercepting rocks.

Boulderstone itself lay in a hollow at the foot of the uplands, and the smoke of its chimneys sometimes filled the valley when there was no wind stirring. The town was not laid out with much regard to architectural principles. Following the line of the river, which broadened as it reached the harbor bar, there was a series of substantial houses, in which the prosperous sons of the town dwelt with their wives and families. Each house, built of sandstone, had its garden sloping to the Boulder, the intervening walls being high or low according to the occupant's taste for privacy. Tropically it was the east end of the town, but it was the West End in gentility. Only timber merchants who had dealings with Norway, slate merchants who worked their own quarries, or large general dealers who supplied all the small shops in the townlets of the county, were able to afford a house on the river-side.

On the line of the shore where the sea broke upon a yellow expanse of sand at low tide, and against giant bowlders of rounded rock when the tide was full, there was a frontage of humble houses belonging in part to the fisher-people, in part to the laborers who worked the slate-quarries. The body of the town was filled up by a market-place where the barter and sale of the Boulderstone end of the county was conducted. Once a week it was crowded with carts, the unyoked horses feeding themselves between the trams; while the farmer, from among his produce in the body of the cart, offered ducks, hens, eggs, peat, pigs, and sometimes grain to the town purchasers. The market-place was surrounded by the shops of Boulderstone, and on one side rose the single building which had pillars in front: an imposing outside lounge of broad pavement, and an open door revealed flights of steps leading to some place of public importance. It was the Town Hall built by the late baronet. In its lower stories local justice was dispensed by the important persons who had risen to the coveted dignity of bailiership; its upper part was the hall where various authorities expounded detached fragments of the universe for the benefit of those who liked lectures; one off-chamber of the hall contained the local museum of curiosities, including Jamaica nuts washed ashore by the Gulf Stream, fossil heads, tails, and backbones of fish, birds' eggs, rock crystals, clubs from the South Seas presented by a district missionary, idols from Egypt by "a traveler," and what not. Off the market-place branched various lanes, which, if followed far enough in each direction, led to a church, of which Boulderstone possessed no fewer than five. The Boulderstone Church—the old Church of Scotland as well as of Boulderstone—stood on an eminence above the beach. There were times when the waves from the bay assailed the walls of the church; and often enough the winds howled round it from the sea when good Mr. Petersen was lifting his voice over the pews. And in the midnight, when the horizon was delivering up its storms, the great bell in the tower sometimes rang without hands. At such times it was known that for a certainty some ships must be "making" the cliffs or the beach, and the morning, with its record of strewn casks, timber, and masts, too often verified what the intonation of the bell had led awakened sleepers to expect. An acre round about the church contained Boulderstone's dead, and very green the turf always was over their heads. The grave-yard was

overlooked on three sides by the upper windows of the poorer folk of the town. Some of them would point to the headstones that covered their fathers and their fathers' fathers before them, if they were so minded, and there came times of hardship when to be gathered beside these would have been a comfortable change for the better.

Next to the parish church one of the most prominent points of Boulderstone was the place known as the "Brae-heed." It was a knuckle of shore which projected between the Boulder and the sea, a projection crowned with a flagstaff, behind which a shelter of whinstone, lined with seats, gave protection to such of the fishermen and seamen at the river mouth as chose to occupy it. And a sprinkling of these were always there, scanning the distance, and making remarks appropriate to the meteorology of the hour. The Brae-heed was indeed the club and lounge of Boulderstone. For timber ships, which had made the river successfully, leaned their masts toward it from below, and the captains and mates, when there were pauses in their work, always knew they could clamber up to good, or at least disputatious, company. The view from it was one that never failed to elicit approbation from people who looked out on it for the first time.

Nor was their approbation without meaning, for the Bay of Boulderstone had much to reward the eye. Looking across the Boulder River there is Boulderstone Castle, rising in grim-turreted strength from the very beach where the waves are playing. Looking out from the Boulder there is the bar, where the tumbling waves are always hoary, and on the very verge of them the salmon-fishers are standing in their cobbles. To the extreme east there is the great headland of Dutton, with its trailing mantle of mist, through which the peak looms. In the west there is Sandstone fronting the Atlantic on a lowering mass of cliff, where the white churning of the sea is forever at work, and where the clouds of sea-birds hover all through the dreary seasons. Inside Sandstone Point is the village of Sandstone, and the quay, where once a week the steamboat pushes its gangways, and takes on board its cattle and wool and grain and slates for "the South;" and between the village and Boulderstone is the fringe of rocky shore, one part of it a cliff on which the Bishop's Castle lends its old walls to the owls and the starlings.

The town and Boulderstone Castle are permanently separated by the river; and though there is a bridge higher up which connects the town with the country, the castle holds its connection with the town by means of a ferry-boat. It is chained to the little wooden pier of Norwegian pine outside the wall of the castle garden, and when the ferry-man is not at the pier he is sitting in the kitchen of the "Whale's Head," at the back of the brae, on the other side of the river, from which it sometimes requires an excessive amount of lusty hallooing to recall him from his dram to his duty.

The factor's people from the back of the castle and the grieve at the home farm have sometimes to trudge by the bridge because the ferry-man will not respond; but the townspeople say his wages are so irregularly paid that he can't be expected to be regular. The ferry-man, besides, has other occupations. He is a grave-digger in the parish church-yard; and sometimes when they are hallooing for him on the shore of the river, he has just laid his spade at the foot

of the old cross in front of the church, and is wiping the beads of perspiration from his brow with the back of his hand, having prepared a grave in his own masterly manner for a neighbor, or a neighbor's wife or child.

Between the castle and the town the feudal relationship that once subsisted had rather broken down. Not that the Dutton family had lost anything in the esteem and respect of the inhabitants of Boulderstone. The castle had too long been a place of refuge for those who sought advice or assistance to have abandoned, even at the date of the events I am chronicling, its earlier reputation. There were inhabitants who remembered the grandfather of the present baronet—he who stood chiseled within the porch of the Town Hall—and the traditions of his generosity were still in the mouths of the old men. The late baronet had fewer dealings with the town, but what was known of him was all in favor of his kind-heartedness. As Boulderstone prospered in his absence, however, and between the factor's office and the Town Council there sprung up feuds about rights of way and the incidence of rates, less affection, naturally, subsisted than in the olden days. If a baronet is to remain the idol of his community, he must give it the benefit of his presence, and make his presence felt from day to day in actions that reach down to the lowest hovels, else he must expect to be forgotten. It was, perhaps, the increasing prosperity of Boulderstone that had much to do with the slight alienation of the populace from the castle. When the late baronet was a young man there was no row of substantial villas by the river, at the windows of which noses might flatten themselves as eager faces watched for the bowling of his carriage on the other side. The row had sprung up as the town asserted its pre-eminence in the county as a good port of call, a moderate fishing-center, and a place of slates. It was the conscious increase of their deposits in the bank, while rumors were going of the baronet's poverty, which enabled them to enlarge their personalities with fat, to wear top-hats all the days of the week, and to feel an independence which might or might not develop into positive hostility, according to circumstances. Certain it was, however, that the over-lordship of the castle had its irritating side; and if it was to be toned down into active feudal friendship, the reappearance and cordiality of the ruling proprietor was necessary. Or, as the "Weekly Buckie" had it in one of its rousing and insinuating articles—"The world is not always going to stand still. Boulderstone is not always to be cap in hand to the castle. When the factor is master it is time to let the landlord know that there is a public spirit among us. It is time for him to learn, having come into his inheritance young, that we, who are in some measure at his mercy, must have justice and fair dealing." The "Buckie" at the same time gave expression to an elaborate panegyric on the new Sir Neil Dutton. It constructed a Sir Neil on the pattern desired by the community, and submitted him as the living lord of the Manor.

CHAPTER VI.

CAROLINE.

LADY DUTTON did not find it convenient to leave her room at the Trinacria the morning after it was agreed that there should be a trip to sea. Mr. Frazer expected to be busily engaged with a batch of telegrams to which he had to prepare the answers in the course of the forenoon, so he was considered to be occupied. It happened, therefore, that when a carriage drove to the door to take up the exploring party there were only two to form it—Caroline Frazer and Sir Neil Dutton. It was scarcely seven o'clock yet, but all Palermo was stirring. Indeed the early morning is the only tolerable part of the day between sunrise and sunset in the capital of Sicily, and good Palermitans who wish to buy their olives and sardines in a decent state of freshness, must repair to market before the heat of the forenoon has turned the sellers on their faces to enjoy their day's *siesta*. This morning, as the baronet handed the girl into the carriage, there was a cool breeze blowing from the sea, and a further sense of coolness was got by looking into the bay from the rushing of the boats hither and thither under their press of lateen sail. It counteracted the effect of the scintillating white walls and roofs, and as the coachman conducted them smartly within the shadow of the hill of Santa Rosalie, neither could have told from the cool morning temperature that there was a scorching sun to escape.

"I like to see cities in the early morning," began Sir Neil to his companion, whose brown eyes, if he had examined them closely, he might have seen to be heavy and sleepy beneath their long lashes.

"Yes," said Miss Frazer, in an encouraging voice. "Why?"

"Well, because a city always gives the best account of itself just before breakfast—a southern city I mean. Look at the faces we see now, and compare them with the faces you might see after sunset in the same place. How fresh and honest and earnest they are! It is only the workers you see at this hour—the true Sicilian breed, who still carry Roman blood in their veins. Not a man in that long string of carts, behind the poles of the oxen, but has a purpose and an intention for the day. And look at the peasant girls, how bright and smiling they are! Yes, show me a city in the early morning if you are to show me it when it is at its happiest."

Miss Frazer looked at the male peasants as she was directed, and thought them extremely handsome men; privately she thought the black-eyed women impudent, but she kept the opinion to herself.

"But I liked the opera last night," she said.

"The opera which none of us heard," laughed the other.

"Yes; but I am sure the people were happy enough there."

"Happy, yes; you can't make a Sicilian unhappy under any circumstances. But there's a difference between last night's enjoyment of the opera and this. I can never reconcile myself to the Sicilian opera. I don't talk of their native composers or their vocalists, but of the use they put their opera-house to. They go to it merely for

the sake of making visits, and without the slightest intention of listening to what is being sung. The result is that the opera is as poor as possible, however exhilarating the audience may be."

"Oh, but the visits they pay each other make them dress so!"

"True," answered Sir Neil; "and their dressing is superb, though it didn't hinder the Sulphur Countess in the box next to us from tearing a whole sisterhood to rags on the opposite tier. Tearing them—not literally, of course. But here we are at the Chapel Palatine; shall we go in?"

"I should like to so much," said Caroline, from whose eyes the breeze and the pungent odors from the orange groves had driven the first heaviness away. Sir Neil led the way through a lofty vestibule columned with Egyptian granite, and they presently stood gazing in upon the blazing splendor of mosaics with which the gilded walls were covered.

"Oh my! it must be Roman Catholic," Caroline whispered, as she saw the pictorial procession of saints in all attitudes between the vestibule and the apse. But Sir Neil had advanced a step or two into the church, and pointing to a seat with an arch whose pillar broke something of the gorgeous glow of the walls, they rested together.

"It must be a new place," said Caroline, looking round in wonderment.

"It was new about eight hundred years ago," replied Sir Neil, smiling, "and except these choir stalls in the distance there have been no renovations."

Whether it was the reflected glow from the mosaics or not, Caroline at that moment blushed deeply as the baronet hastened to tell her that the mistake was readily enough made, the Chapel Palatine being the freshest specimen of its style out of Constantinople. And it must be confessed the girl's ignorance sat nicely upon her as she turned dark inquiring eyes upon her companion.

"It's always delightful," said he, "to come to a place like this with a perfectly fresh visitor. You have hit off just the sort of astonishment you ought to feel by saying the place is new. I don't think any criticism could better bring out the impression of its brilliant glow."

Caroline concluded she had said something a little clever, and recovered herself immediately.

"But it's a Roman Catholic church," she was encouraged to add.

"Why, of course it is. Eight hundred years ago the Protestants hadn't come up, you know."

"Where were they?"

Sir Neil look as grave as he could under the circumstances, and being recently come from Rome, where all the ladies he had met knew the 'ologies, and were prepared to discuss anything with a certain amount of knowledge, he found in the absolute ignorance of the girl at his side a charm which attracted him. "I fancy," he said, playfully, "they must all have been in Scotland; though that isn't good history," he explained, as he saw his companion settling down comfortably under the impression.

At that moment the notes of an organ began to swell through the church, and Caroline seemed involuntarily to move closer to him on

the marble slab. She was very neat and dainty--the little woman robed in her tight, white, embroidered sateen, and bending her head to listen to the penetrating strains of the organ; there was a softness and sweetness of expression in the ruddy, parted lips that did not escape the eye of her companion.

"It is a Sicilian bridal hymn," said Sir Neil, when the strains had died away in the dome; and Caroline gave a little start at his side, which in turn did not escape him.

"Before the sun is too hot I think we might go up on the roof of the observatory." Saying so the baronet rose, and the pair walked under the great fretted dome of the Palatine through a further court, from which they ascended through obscure staircases.

"Do you like wide views, Miss Frazer?" asked her companion, as they stepped out upon a tower, from which the sea and all the distant islands, and Palermo at their feet, were visible.

"I am so afraid I'll be giddy, I can scarcely look round," said Caroline, suddenly, as they emerged on the roof, and the great expanse of trembling azure opened at their feet.

"Cling to me;" and the baronet held his arm out to his companion, who very literally obeyed him.

"Tell me when you have had too much of it," said he, softly, looking down at her. "The feeling will go off as you look out."

Caroline made no reply, but retained her hold upon her companion's arm, as he went on saying,

"I think there's nothing quite like this prospect in Europe, and I've made a point of climbing to all the pinnacles of the cities I've visited. St. Paul's only gives you a mass of fog, with a stream gleaming through it. Notre Dame would be magnificent if the suburbs of Paris were more characteristic. The campanile of St. Mark's shows you an expanse of islands and the Adriatic beyond them. But this is unique. With the curve of the shore, the high guarding cliff of Monte Pellegrino, the greenery of the orange groves, and the line of whiteness where the waves are breaking, I know nothing to compare to it."

They stood in silence for some minutes, and through the arcades and the staircases the Sicilian bridal hymn stole upon them.

"The marriage hymn again," said Sir Neil; "I like it even better coming through the arcades than I did under the dome."

"What a nice hymn it is!" said Caroline, regaining her voice, and looking up at Sir Neil with sparkling eyes.

"And what a prospect!" he rejoined, stepping slowly nearer the edge of the roof. "Look down, and you can see the yacht lying off the Marina. Where shall we be in a week? I can assure you I hope to enjoy myself as I haven't done for years."

The young man spoke the truth, too, for he had certainly enjoyed the two hours of Caroline's companionship amazingly. She had very little to say, it is true, and what she did say was not brilliant.

But it was different from what Sir Neil Dutton had been accustomed to in his intercourse with young ladies up to that date. Within his acquaintanceship he had never numbered any girl who entered a church eight hundred years old, and who thought it must be new, or who wondered where the Protestants were about the date of the Norman Conquest. Under some circumstances such

confessions might have seemed to him an offensive kind of ignorance; but when the girl who made them was the simple, fresh, flower-like beauty that hung upon his arm and looked timidly into the bay, it was only naïve.

"She's a true Scottish maid," he told himself: "gentle, canny, sweet."

Before they returned to their carriage he was interested in her; when they sat down to *déjeuner* in the Trinacria, and when they told the story of the bridal music in the Chapel Palatine to Lady Dutton and Mr. Frazer, there were very pleasant glances interchanged. Only the dowager, before taking refuge from the mid-day heat in the coolness of her own pillared chamber, thought it necessary to send for her son and say to him,

"My dear Neil, I can not have you falling in love with Caroline; she is quite a school-girl. You must reserve your affections for another time. I like Caroline—she is clever and quiet and kind—but I will not have her for a daughter. I have no fault to find with her family. The Frazers are as old as the Duttons; and though Mr. Frazer is called a new man by some people, he is only new in the sense that his branch of the family has dropped out of sight for a generation or two. It has been his lot to make it one of the richest names in Scotland. Yet I shall expect you to consult my wishes, Neil, and not fall precipitately in love."

"Are you quite done, mother?" asked Sir Neil, smiling.

"It depends upon what you have to say, son."

"I have nothing to say, except that if marriage were in my mind, which it isn't, I should like just such a sweet, simple wife as your Caroline would make."

Lady Dutton turned aside to conceal a look of triumph, but when she glanced back in her son's face it was with imperturbable coolness that she announced to him that he must on no account think of marrying Caroline Frazer. Lady Dutton understood the law of contraries, and, as her son retired, she knew that her injunctions would have the effect of making him think very closely of the subject she had banned.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLES FRAZER.

It was no accident that brought Mr. Frazer cruising to Sicily. He was too busy a man to allow himself a luxurious southern holiday, as if he had been a mere lord, deriving a certain income from his lands in half a dozen English and Scotch counties. When his steamboat sailed into the Bay of Palermo he had just completed a survey of the southern portion of the island with the object of verifying some reports about the existence of copper. He had landed at Syracuse, Catania, Girgenti, and some smaller ports; and though the remains of half a dozen civilizations solicited his attention on every hand, he had the fortitude to ignore them. If the fluted pillars of the temples of Jupiter, the Doric columns of the shrines of Venus, had represented some exchangeable value connected with his trip, he would have conscientiously set himself

to study them. As they stood, however, or reclined upon the parched slopes of the Sicilian shores, they were only bits of extinct masonry for him. He was there because of the renowned supply of copper: it was to the subject of copper that he seriously devoted himself; and he brought away with him from several districts what he hoped to make the foundation of a circular which would rouse the cupidity of the investing public and reward him for the unwonted troubles of exploration. He had originally no intention of calling at Palermo at all—it did not promise to further the business he had in hand at the moment; but at Catania his daughter had got a letter from Lady Dutton, then residing in the Trinacria Hotel, which induced him to go there rather than to Marseilles, whence he had proposed to return to London and Scotland. It had been Caroline's fortune to meet Lady Dutton during the spring of the year at Mentone, when her ladyship was waiting upon her husband's recovery. Instead of recovering, her husband died; but previous to that occurrence, Caroline Frazer had been by the purest accident thrown a good deal into Lady Dutton's society. The girl was quiet, and commanded a large purse; at the *table d'hôte* she showed a becoming respect for her ladyship's title when she chose to air its importance among the untitled diners at the same board, and when Lady Dutton was weary of her poor husband's ailments she frequently took refuge in Caroline's sitting-room, and fell asleep on one of her lounges.

Caroline was in charge of an aunt who—a plain little Scotch-woman—kept judiciously in the background, having an awe of a title that gave Lady Dutton a high opinion of her judgment. Once or twice, having met Lady Dutton in the corridor of the hotel, she had courtesied to her in the lowliest manner and called her “mem.” Caroline knew better, being bred at a boarding-school at Brighton at a cost of three hundred a year. But though she neither courtesied nor said “mem,” she had been keenly alive to the fact that Lady Dutton was of another social order from her own, which order she perfectly well understood she must yet have more extensive dealings with. It is doubtful, however, whether Lady Dutton and Caroline would have cemented a friendship had it not been for one taste they had in common. Each of them loved Curaçoa and the allied liquors. It was, in truth, that Caroline, under her aunt's watchful care, might be broken of an awkward habit of drinking Maraschino, mingled with thimblefuls of brandy, that she had been sent to Mentone by her father. Before she had met Lady Dutton the habit had more than once revealed her in an absurd or unamiable light to her father's acquaintances. As she had the best sitting-room in the hotel and the nicest lounges, Lady Dutton found it highly convenient, when exhausted by protracted attendance on her husband, to sip her liqueurs in her little friend's company, and to lounge on her sofas without criticising her. And later on, old Sir Neil being dead, her ladyship discovered that the Caroline Frazer of her acquaintance was daughter to a Mr. Frazer whom the lawyer in Edinburgh alluded to in more than one of his letters as having had dealings with the deceased baronet. The nature of the dealings Lady Dutton did not inquire too freely into, only she kept the name of Mr. Frazer from her son, whose surprise

at the condition of poverty to which they seemed to have been reduced at one blow needed tender dealing. Having discovered the business connection that existed between them, Lady Dutton kept corresponding from Mentone, while Caroline was in Switzerland and the Tyrol; and the last move her ladyship had made from Rome to Palermo was due to the fact that she expected Caroline to persuade her father to bring his yacht there and stay. Having learned to within a few thousand pounds the amount of money that would come to her little friend as heiress, her plans for a marriage were laid before her own weeds had lost the flavor of the shop. Caroline was to marry her son and bring him her great fortune, and she was to retire upon the competence which would accrue from the transaction. About that Lady Dutton swiftly decided; and being a woman who knew how to combine means and ends, she was actually successful in bringing Mr. Frazer to Palermo, and in throwing her son and his daughter into each other's society.

It so happened that what would suit Lady Dutton would suit Mr. Frazer also. His daughter had given him a good deal of anxiety in her time, and he had become conscious of late that certain schemes of alliance with aristocratic families he had planned for her might be broken down by her own thoughtless love for palatable drinks. The first time his eyes had opened to that disagreeable truth was when his daughter was returned upon his hands from her fashionable Brighton school, while a letter explained to him, in cruel angular hand, "that Miss Frazer being thrice detected in a state no young lady should be in from overindulgence in stimulants, she was deemed unfit to remain in the society of the boarders at Westcliffe Seminary." Mr. Frazer, with his strong belief in the power of money, instantly forwarded a check for a considerable amount to the proprietress of the school, and urged them to overlook what, in a young girl, must obviously have been the merest accident. But the Brighton proprietresses returned him his check, with the curt announcement that they were not open to bribery. Next day Caroline was brought home, and ever after a steady watch was kept upon her in order to check what there was some reason to think was hereditary on the mother's side. And Caroline was still so young, so fresh and strong, that after a year's residence with her father he hoped the best for the passing away of the temptation.

Mr. Frazer might himself have made the aristocratic alliance that he wished for his daughter, for he was a reputed millionaire and was not yet fifty-five. Nor had his financial dealings made him lean or ill-favored in any way. He was a small man, but tightly built, with a massive head, surmounted by a brow of inordinate width. His mouth, which he generally kept closed when he did not require to use it, shut firmly, so as to show ilnes on each side of it. His eyes were inexpressive gray eyes, with a dash of green in them; and they would not have been unpleasant had it not been for his manner of using them. He rarely used them for a straightforward glance, yet he saw clearly in his own furtive way. Those who had every-day dealings with him averred that he had eyes "in the back of his head." He certainly might have married high had he cared about it, for he was a presentable man enough.

He was in a manner, however, a misogynist where his own flesh and blood were not concerned, and he regarded women as "fools mostly," that men were better to have as few dealings with as possible. For his own part he limited his dealings with them to the companionship of his daughter, or to giving necessary orders to his servants. Marriage was the last thing he looked forward to for himself, his own wife having left his mind full of bitterness toward the sex. It was currently said of Mr. Frazer that his success in life was due to his limited affections. Whether that was the explanation of it or not, it is certain that for five and-twenty years he had prospered in everything he undertook, and he undertook more than most men in the business world of Scotland.

Few could count the irons that Charles Frazer had in the fire, but everybody knew that he would either withdraw them hot enough for his purpose, or pass them on, if they had cooled, at a considerable profit to himself, to some other person. It could not be said of him that all the schemes he was connected with succeeded, but they invariably succeeded for him. He had the instinct which responded to every public fluctuation; so it turned out that companies which had beggared other men enriched Charles Frazer. His acquaintanceship among men of all kinds was wide, and he was believed, not always wrongly, to "be behind the scenes." He liked the reputation of being a "wire-puller," for it gave him power. And a wire-puller he was in the strictest sense of the term, being a member of more than one of the prominent political clubs in London and Scotland, and presumably interested in every election which took place north of the Tweed. Had he been pressed to give an account of his politics on a public platform, he would have been put to it to define them, for he was no speaker. Privately, however, he had observed that Tory governments are generally in power during periods of commercial depression, and, as he abhorred depressions, he followed "Liberalism" by business instinct. Not that he always read the speeches of the leaders of his party—he was too preoccupied a man to do that; but in all other ways he was loyal to his party, and spent large sums of money on it, and he even had dreams of his own that before he died he might "have a handle to his name." These dreams did not hinder him from being described as a Radical. Mr. Frazer had several residences, but his habitual residence was Edinburgh. He found it convenient to withdraw from the West End of Glasgow and to establish himself in the West End of Edinburgh, where his fortune had become so colossal that a small amount of personal supervision served to keep that part of it together which was at stake in Glasgow. He thought Edinburgh society suited him better than society in Glasgow, where his every-day doings were more minutely known, and where he believed he detected caustic allusions to himself at most of the dinner-tables he attended. The flavor he liked imported into dinner-table-talk was that of the Church, and he got as much ecclesiasticism as he could stand from the clergy which swarmed into the capital. His house, indeed, was an open hostelry to the clergy both of the Free and U. P. churches, scores of whom during the year deposited their black bags at his door to ring the bell and usher themselves into his dining-room. His ecclesiastical predilections were

so strong that his butler had been the beadle of a deceased doctor of divinity in London, who had a wonderful knowledge of wines; and his footman had in early life been apprenticed to a maker of pulpit-gowns. But the latter circumstance was probably accidental. It is certain, however, that he never engaged a coachman without knowing how many communions he had attended; and the female servants were led to understand that on Sabbath evenings they might be "catechised" if any reverend guest felt thus inclined. Why Charles Frazer should addict himself so strongly to the Church it is not easy to say. No one ever accused him of importing Christian principles into his business. His own feeling, probably, was that some clergymen were "behind the scenes" in one or two questions which he had neither time nor inclination to probe. Perhaps he liked the additional power it gave him by establishing his character for Christianity. On the one occasion when he sat in the Free Assembly he certainly enjoyed the loud outbursts of ecclesiastical applause which greeted his entrance among "the fathers and brethren." It was more than compensation to him for the many thousands he had expended on spires and foundations. He felt for a moment that what must be admirable in the opinion of that white sea of immaculate linen and baldness must be admirable in the eye of high Heaven. That very night he put the price of the shares of a collapsed shale company, from which he had providentially withdrawn in time, at the disposal of a sustentation fund, a committee for missionary purposes, and a committee for college bursaries.

In everything he had been successful except his daughter—his sole surviving child. But Providence seemed to him now to have opened up a way. He had long wanted a baronet as a son-in-law, and here was one in all respects suitable at his feet.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT SEA.

By the time Lady Dutton was ready to go on board the yacht, her son had shown Caroline all that was to be remembered in Palermo. He had lounged with her among the sycamores of the "King's Gardens," and led her to the foot of many an undulating nymph in marble, many a muscular torse of a god on its renovated pedestal. He had been to the Ziza with her, and looked at the fish crowding in golden confusion among the leaves of papyrus which encircled the basin where the Arabian emirs once washed themselves. "It was all Arab at one time," he explained to her, "and this place has lasted through the centuries to prove that the northerners are better stuff than the southerners; for long after the Arabs were done ruling the island the Normans made them build walls and houses and palaces for them."

To which Caroline, caring nothing about the Arabs, and perhaps less for the Normans, responded by looks of intelligence and interest that more than satisfied the baronet. He did not ask more from her than that she should see Palermo with admiring eyes, and

know it through his description of it. One day they went into some private gardens, the Sicilian nobility being only too glad to levy a franc upon strangers for the privilege of admiring their noble horticulture; they passed beneath an avenue of sycamores which had cast their leaves upon the walk. At the end of the walk there was a summer-house of woven beech-work, to enter which they would have to descend one or two steps.

"Shall we go in?" asked Sir Neil; "it seems tempting;" and Caroline, pushing laughingly forward, thrust the door ajar. But with an exclamation of horror she fell back upon her companion. Sir Neil looked in over her head.

"I wonder what made the Italians do that," he said, leading her rapidly into the sunshine, for she was pale and trembling.

"I can't conceive what they should build a lovely summer-house for, and put a bare-boned skeleton in it. It must mean something, but I can't tell what."

They went into no more gardens after that. And, indeed, going up the Monte Pellegrino one morning together, an incident occurred that would have made an end of all sauntering had the time not come for yachting. Sir Neil was anxious that they should get up to the grotto of St. Rosalia, the child-saint, who lies sculptured in marble within a shrine of rock, and whose spirit is still invoked by thousands of the people in the place.

He was telling the sacred history of the child Caroline, as they wound up the steep, rocky road, when a bright green snake darted from side to side, unable to make its escape. Caroline grew livid with terror, and before the reptile had time to disappear she had fainted in Sir Neil's arms. They were close by the grotto at the time, so lifting her he carried her safely within its shadow, a dark-eyed tonsured monk coming forward with wine and water to restore her. As the baronet bore her into the grotto, and her brown hair touched his cheek, he began to feel a strong sense of compassion for the light, fragile creature who had lost consciousness merely at the sight of a harmless snake. He was used to them himself, and could not understand the effect of their sudden appearance on others. As he laid her down near the shrine, he looked involuntarily from the marble St. Rosalia to the pale cheeks and ruddy lips of the inanimate girl. The priest looked too, and made the sign of the cross with some agitation, for there was a resemblance. Sir Neil was not superstitious, but it flashed on him that Caroline must have a saintlier nature than he had imagined.

It was with a new kind of respect, therefore, that he led her, on her recovery, to the carriage at the foot of the hill. Was she not of the flesh and blood that men deified and prayed to for generations?

Mr. Frazer's yacht, or rather the yacht that Mr. Frazer sailed, for he had hired it at Marseilles from a young nobleman of Irish extraction whose remittances had somewhat suddenly come to an end, was a very elegant, roomy, strong little ship of her calibre. She went fifteen knots in steam, and as many under canvas when the wind was with her. There was accommodation not only for Lady Dutton but for her maid, Caroline's old Scotch aunt being privately sent to a berth amidships to make room for the latter personage.

Sir Neil got the captain's room, that officer being reduced to the first mate's, his room being for some reason the largest on board. Mr. Frazer had a cabin to himself, not quite so large as that assigned to the baronet. The general cabin was fitted up with oak panelings, and the quantity of gilded mirrors was kept in harmony with the plain strength of the remainder of the fittings. As they steamed out of the harbor of Palermo, and the Sicilian hills were becoming fainter and fainter to the view, the baronet and the capitalist sat chatting together at the cabin skylight. The ladies were afraid of the motion, and for æsthetic reasons preferred to keep to their berths until they had got their "sea-legs."

"What makes you think Carry is of a very sensitive nature?"

Mr. Frazer was asking his companion.

"That episode on Monte Pellegrino."

"What episode?"

Mr. Frazer knew it, but was not unwilling to hear it again from the lips of Sir Neil.

"Why, hasn't she told you? When we were going to the shrine of St. Rosalia a little green snake darted out on the road, and Miss Frazer fainted. I carried her into the shrine, where the priest fetched some wine and water. For some moments she was like marble; and, strangely enough, the priest said like the marble statue of St. Rosalia. I saw the resemblance myself. It was striking." And Sir Neil looked wistfully to the fading summit of Pellegrino, in the cavern of which the marble saint reposed. Then he thought of the living image of the saint down-stairs, and sighed.

Mr. Frazer seemed to detect the train of ideas in Sir Neil's mind, for eying him with his furtive glance he smiled and looked pleased.

The little steamer was behaving admirably in a considerable sea, but the spray beginning to make breaches over her bows, and showers of it coming aft to where the two men stood, they made their way inside the deck-house, still facing Sicily as they sat.

"You have never done anything on the foreign Bourses?" said Mr. Frazer, suddenly.

"On the Bourses? No; I know nothing at all of them by personal experience."

"But you know a good many people in the French and German embassies, I suppose?"

"Yes, in Paris I used to know them all—in Vienna too. Why do you ask?"

"Because we generally observe that the members of the embassies come home either with respectable fortunes or in a state of poverty, and we attribute the circumstances to the use of early information on the Bourse."

"I am quite sure none of my friends ever made such a base use of their knowledge."

Mr. Frazer was silent a moment, but began again.

"You have no conscientious scruples, I suppose, against Bourse transactions. You would not deny that fortunes may be made there quite honorably?"

"I should be a fool to deny that. Many of my friends have enriched themselves there; and about their honor there is not the slightest doubt."

"No, to be sure not," said Mr. Frazer, as if he were relieved of a heavy load. "I was afraid," he continued—and he really was afraid, for his week's converse with the young man had shown him a stubborn man of honor on points he had not formerly known that honor existed—"I was afraid you might have scruples with regard to all stock-exchange transactions. Now, my visit to Sicily has not been for nothing, I may say, for the pleasure I have had in your society, and in the society of Lady Dutton. But in addition to that pleasure, I may say I have had some very profitable business. We have had engineers' reports in our hands in Glasgow for some time anent copper ore in the district of Girgenti. I have gone over the ground myself, and have been able to testify to the truth of the original reports, and I expect by this time the 'Copper Company, Limited,' is already launched."

"That's surely quick work."

"Well, the company was formed, you see, before I came out to Sicily at all. It only required my finishing touch to be telegraphed. But the shares are not all assigned, and I want you to hold for a few weeks four or five thousand pounds' worth. It will refund you, you understand."

"You know, however, that I have nothing to buy with at present. What I have I owe entirely to your own kindness and belief in the power of my estates to get into a paying way again."

"You have nothing to do but to hold them," was the reply. "Your banker will tell you when they have changed hands;" and at that juncture Mr. Frazer, professing to be a little tired, betook himself to his cabin.

Sir Neil was left with the deck to himself, and as he paced from wheel to taffrail he cast up the events of the last few months. His father was gone, and he was to be no longer a wanderer. With his father's death came responsibilities—Heaven knew, such a load of them as he never had reason to look forward to. How the nature of them gradually became apparent to him in Mentone, where he had buried his father; in Florence and Rome, where he had taken his mother away from the painful scene of the death; in Falermo, where—in dear Palermo he thought, turning to the south. Why did he call it dear Palermo? Why did he murmur to himself Santa Rosalia, as he looked down the leaden steps of the cabin staircase? And in the midst of the throb of ecstasy which visited his heart, why did his lips repeat mechanically, "You have nothing to do but to hold them. Your banker will tell you when they have changed hands."

As he looked out over the darkening sea, from whose surface the sun had withdrawn his saffron light, there was a conflict of feeling going on within him. He was overwhelmed with gratitude to the man who had shown him a way out of difficulties which, but a short time ago had seemed hopeless. But was it all gratitude?—He was grateful, but he was something more. He leaned his arm on the deck-house and looked to the south, star after star springing into view upon the blue horizon as he gazed. It was not enough that he should see that glory of the heavens himself. There should be a companion to share it with him; and he turned to pace the deck again.

"Santa Rosalia!" he exclaimed, stopping himself, as he thought his footsteps might raise a certain sleeper beneath him. The sleeper was not his mother, nor his mother's maid. Again he leaned on the deck-house, and looked out over the sea. There were lanes of starlight between him and the south, and as he looked upward he saw that the sky was sown with stars. But now he saw neither sea nor stars nor sky—only an oval face with dark eyes and ruddy lips, as it smiled on him in the Palatine Chapel, as it faded into unconsciousness in the grotto on Pellegrino, as it seemed horror-stricken among the sycamores of the King's Gardens. Yet he could not cast up a score of words that had fallen from her. She had been almost silent since he met her, but such a silence of eloquent looks!

That night the midnight watch observed that "his lordship" was much upon the deck; for one reason or another, he did not close an eye until the morning light had revisited the sea.

CHAPTER IX.

AT THE BRAE-HEAD.

ELEVEN o'clock in the forenoon usually saw the Brae-head of Boulderstone with its full complement of visitors. The cross-shaped shed to which they repaired had accommodation for facing north, east, or west; and the particular nook which they affected depended entirely upon the weather. When it blew from the north they chose the seat and the side from which they commanded the river and the castle; when from the east, they took the seat which fronted the bay toward Sandstone, the cliffs and the light-house; when from the west, they looked right out to the bay and the wild Atlantic beyond, over the line of breakers falling upon the bar.

"Mak' room for Faither Dykes," said a cheerful, broad-limbed fisherman one forenoon to the assembled group of hairy, weather-beaten men who with hands in pockets and pipes in mouths, were stolidly gazing in front of them.

Father Dykes was a venerable figure with a stick, who was slowly coming down the Brae-head to the place of outlook. He paused frequently on the way down to recover his breath, and when at last he reached the center of the group, he let himself drop into the space made for him with a "Heck, laddies, it's a' awa' wi' it!" He sat there breathing hard through his nostrils, the puckers in his tanned cheeks drawn tight with the firm closing of his mouth.

"The banker'll no' do't, I tell you, Sandy Trail. He'll no' gie money without valoo for it, an' he says there's nae security guid eneuch for the price of sax boats in a' the Fisher Biggins. It's as muckle's his place is worth to gie't."

The speaker was a ruddy specimen of his class, strong and well built. He had just suggested that room should be made for the old man who joined the group.

"I'll warran' it's the storrum ye're at," said Faither Dykes, half turning his gray eye on the speaker—a wonderful gray eye for freshness of color, seeing that the owner of it had passed his eightieth year.

"'Deed is't, father," said another of the company; "what ither thing wad ye hae in our heeds? If we canna get the storrum's wark mended we'll hae a gae sair winter."

"I'm some thinkin' ye had yersels tae blame that got yer boaties wracked that nicht," piped the faither in reply. "Ye suld a' hae been ower the Crook at yer lines."

"Man, faither, ye're gettin' blin', an' canna tell a storrum frae a cawm," said a fisherman, irritably.

"Keep a civil tongue in yer head, Jock Smith. I'm no that deef but whit yer impidence can gang through ma lugs. Storrum!" repeated the faither, contemptuously, "yer gutchers an' me has been ower the Crook oorsels in waur wather than you, an' at the lines a' nicht. Fac', I'm thinkin' the wather's changin' a'thegither this twa three dizen years. It *is* changin', for I've seen the mornin' that we wad get up after a storrum, an' there wad be nae beach for timmer. Frae the Brae-heed tae the Rock Wall it was jist a' ae confusion o' broken ships. Whaur did Maister Kidd get his fortune, think ye? Oot o' copper bolts frae the wrackage. Nooadays there's nae wrackage but yer ain boats."

"Faither Dykes gat up on his wrang side this mornin'," observed a fisherman standing out from the group, with a spy-glass in his hand.

"He hasna had his mornin' yet," responded another.

"Storrums," continued the old man, ignoring the frivolities of his juniors, "ye micht hae counted the corpses by the dizzen wi' all the wracks that wis on't; I mak' nae doot whitiver but what the wather's fa'n an' the sea's growin' cawmer. There was a maytologist ance told me oor cleemat wis ga'n doon. Lads, I've seed a win' blawin' that a cannon-ba' wadna gang through't."

"Lord, faither, did it not blaw ye off a'thegither, an' ye nae that big nayther?" asked the first spokesman, good humor breaking out all over his countenance.

"Na, faith, graivity keepit me t' the grun', an' it's a muckle win' that'll coup graivity. But gin the mune's gae'n whustlin' awa' tae the sun, maybe graivity's gaun wi't, and that's the raison o' yer bit blaws o' win' bein' ca'd a storrum nooadays."

"Graivity or no graivity, Faither Dykes, it's weel kent that ye hiv yer sons i' the Sooth that'll no lat ye want for nothin'; but there's sax boat-lod o' us in the toon o' Boulderstone that canna mak' anither penny till we get boats, an' there's no as muckle money as the banker says, in the biggins as'll buy them."

"Three o' the ministers has been doon i' the biggins, an' they a' say the same thing," remarked a dolorous, shaven man.

"What's that" asked Faither Dykes.

"Pray on oor bended knees."

"Oo, ay," said the faither, "that's aye their way. Did they say that ye were to pray that the banker's hard hert micht saften?"

"Whist, faither, an auld man like ye should ken better than mak' a feel o' prayin'," said the dolorous man, who was a deacon over half a dozen sisters and brothers who assembled on Baptist principles in a store-room each Sunday to pray for the rest of their fellow-townsmen.

"It's no' the prayin'," said the old man, who had got along all his days as a sincere heathen. "I never heard of ony man bein' the

waur o' that, if it wasna that the knees o' his breeks needed mair mendin' than ither fowks'. But prayin'll no pay the rents if ye dinna catch fish."

"Ay, weel, talk aboot rents; what think ye o' Cap'n Jansen noo?" asked the man with the spy-glass. "He's no gaun to tak' a single farden o' rent the year."

"He's a richt gude fallow the cap'n," said Faither Dykes, and at that moment the captain turned the corner of the outlook.

"Mornin', lads," was his salutation in a brisk tone.

"Mornin', cap'n," responded half a dozen voices.

"West-no'-west," said the captain, as if he had just come on deck, sniffing the wind from the sea, and taking a view of the broken tops of the waves in the bay.

"West-nor'-west, sir," repeated the man with the spy-glass.

"Who's in luck this morning—Sandstone or the river?"

"Sandstone again, cap'n. Geordie Inkster says they sent a boat aff tae bark goin' east, and a pilot was ta'en. It'll be twa three pounds tae them. It's that Magnus. He has an eye like a hawk, and win's or wather's naethin' t'm."

"There's a chance for Boulderstone," said the captain, suddenly; "foresail, jib, square-sail—1,500 tons if she's a pound, and a full-rigged ship, too. Away you go, boys."

As the captain spoke a large vessel was seen outside Dutton Head, flying the pilot's flag, and in a twinkling three of the young men, followed by an elder, were scampering down the beach. Ten minutes had not intervened between the sighting of the ship and the spreading of a brown sail at the bar of the river.

"Deil hae't, but they'll lose her," said Faither Dykes; "what's that but ane o' thae Sandstone boats makin' oot frae beneath the licht-hoose."

It was true. The Sandstone men with a strong pressure of canvas were tearing through the bay toward the vessel.

"To think o' Faither Dykes pickin' oot boats like that!" remarked a contemplative man, who kept his interest in the racing well under restraint. As for the rest of the Brae-head, it presented a scene of the greatest animation. Captain Jansen, with his hand on the flag-staff and a brier-root pipe between his teeth, was quietly determining which was to be the winner of the prize.

"Kirsty, it's three pounds in your pocket," said a youth, whose individuality was lost in a gigantic sou'-wester of yellow, to an elderly woman with a hard, screwed-up countenance, who was now watching eagerly on the outside of the male group.

"Gae wa' wi' your havers," responded Kirsty, as if she had been interrupted at her devotions.

The boats were about an equal distance from the ship, and as the waves were rolling into the bay in considerable height, their sails sometimes disappeared for some moments at a time from view.

"Kirsty," said the youth in the sou'-wester at one of these moments, "your man's gane tae the boddom."

Jokes of that description were not, however, appreciated on the Brae-head; and as the boy, almost immediately after he made the remark, retired from the scene of the excitement with his hand at

his left ear, his voice raised in a plaintive strain, he probably repented his witticism.

"Michty, but I wadna wonner if the river got her!"

"Oot o' the road, Jock Smith, and let me see them."

"Na; it's Sandstone—it's Sandstone."

Every man was on his feet now, as the great ship slackened sail and the hubbub of voices became louder and louder.

It was impossible to tell which was to be the fortunate boat. They were still lashing through the waves about equal distances. Kirsty had been re-enforced by one or two female companions with shallow baskets, who were waiting the arrival of their "men" and the sharing of their fish.

"Never ye fash, Kirsty," said a fair-headed, buxom wench who was now waiting the arrival of her own husband's boat with quite as keen an excitement as the woman she consoled.

"Haud your tongue, woman;" and Kirsty, saying this, strained toward the Atlantic, as the boats swept round the bow, and the stern of the full rigged ship. Neither of them reappeared, so it was known that both boats had got a rope at the further side of the ship.

"He must be short-handed," said Captain Jansen, "he needs them both."

"Weel, Kirsty, ye can gang up the toon," added her buxom comforter, "an' lang Geordie'll no threeten ye wi' the jile for yer butcher's account."

Kirsty, hard-featured and loveless and rough, only replied, "Aweel, I'm gled for the men's sake," and turned back to the Fisher Biggins.

The excitement subsided. Faither Dykes began to lick his lips with his dry tongue, and to feel that "he wad be nane the waur o' a dram."

Captain Jansen's pipe was finished, so he turned to accompany the oldest active inhabitant. The rest of the men and women went down to the edge of the water to see what the line-fishers, who had been out all night, had brought ashore in their boats.

CHAPTER X.

THE ENGAGEMENT.

THE yacht had been well-nigh a fortnight at sea, and it was as yet no further away from Sicily than the most southern bay of Sardinia. They had made a detour of the Lipari Islands, and had seen the black columns of smoke at the tips of the cones, just as it had been a strip of the iron-fields of Lanarkshire, with all its blast furnaces set down in the Mediterranean azure. Off Capri they had cast anchor, and from the deck they saw those amazing round-limbed fisher-girls, who, like the sirens of old, enchant so many British artists, marry them out of hand, and keep them in beautiful durance all the rest of their lives.

From Capri they made a quick passage to the Bay of Cagliari, partly to see Sardinia, partly to get letters, as it was the last address the party had given their friends in England.

Mr. Frazer, the morning after their arrival in the Bay of Cagliari, sat at one end of the cabin table with a pile of letters and telegrams in front of him; Sir Neil with a smaller batch was similarly occupied; the ladies were lounging through the forenoon heat in their respective cabins.

"I find," said the baronet, looking up from his letters, "that £3000 have been put to my credit at an Edinburgh bank. How am I to regard it? Is it a portion of the loan you mean to invest in the slate quarries of Boulderstone?"

"Not at all," he answered, smiling; "you have made it."

"How can I be said to have made it, when until I received this letter from Queen Street, I never made a single move in the matter?"

"No, but you have made it all the same; the shares that were assigned to you in the Sicilian Copper Company increased in value and have changed hands. They were yours; they are now somebody else's. There is nothing wonderful in that, Sir Neil."

The two men looked at each other from the ends of their table. It was the first time the baronet had ever experienced a "transaction." The extent of his knowledge of business hitherto had been to draw the amounts paid him quarterly by way of income. He hardly knew whether to feel pleased or dejected as he realized that he had become possessed of so considerable a sum in so occult and easy a fashion. Mr. Frazer enjoyed his embarrassment; there was something very virgin and fresh in it to the experienced projector.

"You may keep your mind easy on the subject," he added; "it is not a great transaction by any means, but for a first one it will do."

"For a first one!" said Sir Neil, reflectively. "Do you anticipate any more of the same sort for me? You know I had not made up my mind whether I should ever deal in shares. There's a side to it I don't like."

Mr. Frazer prepared to resume his reading as the baronet added, smiling, "Only, it is rather ungracious to make a suggestion of that sort now that the transaction is finished, and so satisfactorily."

Both men resumed their letters, and presently the baronet unfolded a long parchment roll, finely emblazoned, and containing at the end of a periodic address a number of signatures.

"You see what Boulderstone is doing for me," said he, handing it over to his friend.

Mr. Frazer ran his eye down it rapidly, with the comment, "They expect a good deal out of you, at any rate."

The document was the congratulatory vote of the local parliament which sat at the gate of Boulderstone Castle and managed the destinies of the town drains, the pump, the streets, the foreshores, and the general municipal peace of the place.

"Well, they have always been used to a good deal being done for them in my father's time."

The baronet opened a fresh letter, and again said, suddenly,

"How quickly you do business! You have appointed a manager for Boulderstone."

There was just the least shade of irritation in the tone of his voice as he said so. It was not lost upon Mr. Frazer, who, running

through a file of his own correspondence, picked out a letter, spread it before him, and replied deliberately,

"No, Sir Neil, not appointed exactly. That would be more than you empowered me to do."

The baronet paused for a further explanation, and receiving none, read aloud,

"I have been in Boulderstone for some five-and-thirty years. I have made your father's interests my interests. Day and night I have studied to make myself acquainted with all that concerned the estates. I have managed them honestly and frugally. My books and accounts are open to inspection from the first day I came into the rent-house to the present hour. I know, sir, that during that time other influences have been at work, and that you have not come into an inheritance free from embarrassment. Far from it—And so on, and so on," said Sir Neil; "the letter is from old Kay, the factor, and he seems to have received an alarming telegram of some sort which he thinks equivalent to being turned out on the world. Kay is a most worthy old fellow, and deserves and must receive much better treatment than that."

"This birkie has a will of his own," thought Mr. Frazer, as he looked at him; adding aloud, "There's some mistake somewhere; Mr. Kay has no cause for alarm; the man I have sent down will merely look into matters from a business point of view; he will not seek to supersede any one."

Sir Neil, accordingly, looking satisfied, rose from his seat under the burnished cabin lamp, and finding that he might intrude upon his mother's privacy, he passed into the side saloon, where she was sleepily reclining with a novel in her hand.

"Well, mother, you may sign checks again," he said. "We've been on the Stock Exchange during the last few weeks, though we didn't know it, and are winners by three thousand."

"My dear Neil, you surprise me."

"Nevertheless it is the case, and I thank Heaven that at least it will save you from the kind of humiliation you had begun to experience at Paris and Palermo, if not sooner."

"What a man he is!" said Lady Dutton, inclining her head toward the cabin door, alluding to the financier.

"In all these matters he is a man of genius," said the baronet, retiring; "there are good days in store for Boulderstone, I think," he added, cheerfully, as he passed out and up to the open air, with a very strong feeling of gratitude to the man of business poring over his letters.

On the afternoon of the same day Sir Neil and Caroline were standing together near the wheel. The girl was smiling with that expression of gentle languor which comes into the eyes of young creatures when they have begun to love. And she was really a little in love with the tall, athletic figure who was leaning over the wheel and looking into her face earnestly.

"You know my taste about the high places of cities," he was saying. "I am never happy until I have got a view from the top-most outlook; if it's a steeple, or a spire, or a tower, so much the better. Then I feel that I have got the point of view known to the eagles and storks, or the swallows of the place, and I'm con-

tent. In the case of Cagliari, you see it has none of these—only a hill with a flat summit, a series of winding streets, leading among old bijou shops, a cathedral and a college. What do you think? May we go up and look out across the bay this evening?"

"I shall like it above everything," said Caroline, turning up her eyes prettily, and sighing with the gentlest movement of her bosom.

"Not that this isn't very nice," remarked Sir Neil, lifting his elbow from the wheel and looking round the spacious Bay of Cagliari.

"Oh, no; I'm sure this is quite too charming." Here Caroline repeated a criticism of Lady Dutton's, which she was sure it would be the correct thing to say. But she might have said anything, and it would have sounded divine to the young man in the state of mind he then enjoyed. There was, however, no extravagance in his remarks.

The yacht lay at anchor among a score or so of sailing-ships. Here and there on the blue waves boats were plying, and their occupants sung wild Sardinian chants as they rowed.

On the hillside the sun lit the dome of the cathedral, and it glowed like a ball of fire among the piles of square, flat-roofed houses. To the right hand there was a long headland of sand, and the palm-trees, gaunt and motionless, were casting lean, dark shadows athwart it. To the left there was a range of blue mountains, peak after peak rising in dark outline against a sky of violet, in which were broken islands of orange and saffron. The gentlest air of the sea was wafted from the south, and it lifted the bay into ripples.

"We may go ashore now, I think," said Sir Neil, as the yacht's boat was brought to the staircase; and he handed Caroline down to the arms of a blue-jacket, who helped her into her place in the stern of the boat. In ten minutes they were on the quay and mounting the hill together. The streets were narrow and steep, but here and there a little window showed Sardinian treasures to catch their eye. At one of them they paused as Sir Neil drew his companion's attention to the rings.

"Like an entomologist's case, isn't it? Nothing but beetles, beetles, everywhere. These are as old as Carthage, they say, and the girls are wearing them yet. Look across the street at the window above the door—two Spanish-looking girls have their ears adorned in the same way. They are pretty."

Caroline looked up at her foreign sisters in the window above the door; they smiled down at her graciously; but she only tightened her hold on Sir Neil's arm and moved away.

The summit of the town is an old deserted fort. Its sides are no longer mounted with guns. There is a boulevard of lines running round the outside of the walls, which overlooks the bay on one side, and on the other the wide champaign country, from which the Old-world peasantry bring in their oranges and citrons and grapes to the market-place of Cagliari.

The pair sat down on the stone edge of the fort without speaking, and looked out upon the sea and the further mountains. The sun had disappeared from the scene, and it was that interval of the evening before the radiant light has gone out of the heavens and the

stars begin to climb into their places. The sounds of a merry town-life were rising from the shore—inarticulate musical voices, the lilt of the Sardinian pipe, laughter, and an undertone of breaking waves.

"It might be two thousand years ago," said Sir Neil, sentimentally, and Caroline smiled up in his face—"It might be two thousand years ago, and I am the Roman prætor. I have been appointed to Caralis, and it is the granary of Rome. You see the triremes at anchor there. They have had an engagement with a fleet from Carthage, and the piping you hear is a native musician playing the *ballo toudo*, which my Roman seamen are dancing with the Sardinian girls. They are flushed with wine, for they have plundered the Phœnician, and their shouts are the sounds of conquest turned to revelry. I am the prætor—good gracious, am I?" exclaimed the baronet, breaking down in his high-falutin, as he watched his companion's face growing serious and still more serious.

"I wouldn't like to be anything but what I am," said Caroline, softly.

"You enjoy it, then?"

Caroline closed her eyes, as if her enjoyment had no language to express itself.

Sir Neil was sitting with his back against the trunk of a lime-tree, and after a silence of some moments he drew the girl, resistless, toward him.

"I seem to have been made very happy," he murmured to her, "since I came to know you. I think we might go on increasing each other's happiness through the years that lie ahead of us. Something told me, when I was on Monte Pellegrino that morning and looked from the Santa Rosalia to you, that I should owe much to you. Not happiness merely, but help for the fight of life. And I need help."

He was talking in the darkness now—a darkness illuminated by myriads of stars—and Caroline was close to him. He had his answer, he knew, as he stooped to kiss her. She had promised herself to him by all the tokens of trust and love.

"My Santa Rosalia, my patron saint!" he exclaimed again and again as he embraced her.

And as he led her to the shore they paused at the little window of the jeweler and entered.

Half an hour afterward Mr. Frazer, who was pacing the deck of the yacht rather uneasily, saw a diamond scintillate from his daughter's finger as she grasped the taffrail to come aboard. He knew that they were engaged.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. HEW BROCK.

THE hamlet of Sandstone bore much the same relationship to Lobster Keep that Boulderstone bears to Boulderstone Castle. Any feudal attachment which there was virtually belonged to Mr. Hew Brock, of Lobster Keep. He owned the headland on which Sandstone stood, though the keep itself was a tower and country-seat

miles to the west. Part of the hamlet was Sir Neil Dutton's—the smaller part; but there was no divided allegiance among the inhabitants. They had always preferred the Duttons to the Brocks, and an event occurred in the course of the autumn which gave some of them reason to prefer the Duttons still more. Up to that autumn, however, they had but little to do with the other proprietor. On a certain day of the year they were expected to empty the shining contents of a stocking on a table in an office inside the outer gates of the keep. The stocking contained the rent of the Sandstone crofters, who held feus from the Brocks. Sometimes there was more of it than at other times, and then the tenants had what passed for a word of congratulation snapped at them, like a shot from a pistol. The line of occupiers who had passed themselves down at the keep were never remarkable for soft answers. If the hamlet paid its small way pretty well, then it was not verbally condemned to unmistakable torture. If the season had been hard with them, the corn and fishing short, the tenants were sent away with some of the choicest things in blasphemy ringing in their ears. But the blasphemy never covered any sinister intention.

Sandstone went on its uneventful way, the men going down the cliffs to their boats and to the North Sea, where they lent the use of their hands and eyes to skippers nervously making the headland; the women coaxing what they could out of the acres of scrub and fen they were allowed to farm. A hard life, truly, but there was little grumbling, for Sandstone knew nothing very much better with which to compare itself. Besides, the score of families who composed the community were not of the stuff which makes grumblers. They were stout-hearted men and women, whom the long fight with land and sea had improved rather than deteriorated. A local antiquary in Boulderstone was responsible for the theory that in the beginning of the seventeenth century a ship-load of Scandinavian seamen were driven ashore there, that in time they had gone in among the hills and wived with the Celts, and that from then till now Sandstone had been Sandstone. And Boulderstone, cozily wrapped as it was within the folds of its valley, used to congratulate itself on a stormy night that its fathers had not built their houses on a crag above the sea. When the spring-time came its lads and lasses were able to hear the linnets among the yellow broom behind the Brown Hill, and the blackbirds at the manse swelling into a passionate outburst of song; whereas at Sandstone the wail of the sea-mew or the cry of the auk was the softest piping that reached the ears.

It was an austere, rather Pagan community, for neither steeple nor school-house was visible in it. Once a month or so the parish minister of Boulderstone drove round and told them some of the things that happened on the coast of Syria a long time ago, just to keep them in countenance with the rest of the world. They were expected, however, to walk to Boulderstone to church and to make their children attend school there.

This autumn Lobster Keep had a change of proprietors. Sandstone came to know it, as it knew most of its gossip from the sea. A boat's crew had been paid to land some luggage from the cutter at the little lobster harbor, and they had seen a flag flying on

the turrets. They saw the new proprietor ascend the hewn staircase of sandstone that led tortuously from the harbor to the keep. What did he look like? Most of the Brocks they had known upon rent-days were brown, shaggy men. As this one turned to front the heaving expanse of waters the Sandstone pilots saw a face which blazed with crimson, and hair that shone with a tinge only less fiery. The new occupier looked down on them, and seeing some of his luggage a little rudely handled, his voice went down the cliff in a volley of imprecations. They understood him. He was like his "forbears."

"Oo ay," said Osric, the oldest inhabitant of Sandstone; "I ken his kind—sweer an' tak' the rent. They say he's no' a relation at a'; but he's a Brock, an' the blood o' his forbears 'll be in him."

Osric, however, was not quite correct. Though the new Brock bore the name of the old proprietors of the keep he had no known relationship to them. He was a younger son of a Dundee Brock—his father, a worthy, pushing man, had discovered the secret of producing sacks in enormous quantities in an incredibly short time. His father during his earlier years had been a working mechanic, when one day it came into his head as he was engaged in oiling a piston that he could improve on the process he was superintending. He did improve on it, keeping his own counsel, and in the course of time getting his own patent taken out, and still later on having his own mill above his head, as he deserved to have. The offspring of his loins were not so successful as the ideas that sprung from his brain. His son Hew troubled him beyond all his family, and it was currently said in Dundee that Hew was the crook in his father's lot. Once or twice he had threatened to die, and except in the four-and-twenty refreshment rooms and bar parlors which he was wont to frequent, it was generally deemed that if he did it would be a fortunate circumstance for Mr. Brock. There are constitutions, however, which thrive apace upon unlimited dram-drinking; the alcohol seems to act as a preservative. It was so in Mr. Hew Brock's case. The alcohol preserved him, and the apoplexy with which he had been threatened once and again subsided. It happened on the back of one of the fits of penitence, induced by an attack of illness due to over-drinking, that Hew Brock "got round" his father. He represented to him that the cause of his hard living was want of congenial employment. His tastes, he said, were those of a gentleman, a country gentleman. He liked shooting, fishing, yachting, and farming. Fresh air must be got for him. Country life would reform him. Why not let him have his portion of his fortune, now that the estate of the Brocks was in the market? The father, working mechanic that he was, cared little about country life himself, but he had come dimly to believe that he must have been a descendant of the real Brocks of the north, who had somehow got out of line of march with them. The opportunity seemed a good one for connecting his family again with landed people. Then it might restore his son, and in any event it would get him out of the way of Tayside gossip. He might marry, and pull through respectably.

These, briefly, were the circumstances that brought a Brock back to Lobster Keep, after the last of the name had been carried out to

the little bleak inclosure on the edge of the moor, where there were half a dozen lichened tombstones inside a dilapidated iron railing, bearing dates to the end of the sixteenth century.

Old Osric prophesied that they would see as little of the new proprietor as they had seen of the old stock. But he was wrong, for the very next week, when the minister from Boulderstone came round to tell them in his monthly scriptural address not to indulge in the lust of the eye and the pride of life, and to mortify many sinful tendencies, which, if they had them at Boulderstone, were not much known at Sandstone, he told them that the new Mr. Brock was riding all about the country and showing himself to everybody. It was not, therefore, such a surprise as it might have been to six young maidens of Sandstone who were plying their sickles in one of the outer fields of the hamlet, to see a stout-backed man with a ruddy face cantering through the heather one afternoon, and drawing up within a few yards of them.

"Here, one of you girls, come and hold my horse!" he shouted. "You can do it," he told a plain, brown wench, who was shading her eyes and staring at him. "You are the nearest and"—sweeping the group with his eyes—"the plainest-looking. You don't know me," he remarked, kicking aside the osier framework which did duty as a hedge, and striding into the field. He got no answer, but a dozen dark eyes looked at him with a mixture of anxiety and wonder. He was an imposing man, and walked abruptly in among them. "I am Brock, of Lobster Keep. You are my tenants. Well, girls, what are you afraid of?" he added, as two of their number precipitated themselves on their comrades, when he reached out his arms to touch them. "I won't eat ye," he continued, progressing through the party, and extracting a resounding kiss from one and then another of the struggling group. "Where are the men?" he asked, as the victim of one of his salutes lifted the corner of her apron and carefully wiped her mouth.

"A Norway timmer ship missed stays off the Sandstone Headland, and they're a' aboard tryin' to get her into deep water," replied the most forward-looking of the group.

Mr. Hew Brock directed a searching glance at her, and her cheek seemed to have an inviting redness for him, for he made two rapid steps forward and would have saluted again if he could.

"And that's Sandstone," pointing with the handle of his whip to the thatched and scattered houses on the cliff, at the corners of which some matronly figures were standing, shading their eyes and looking in the direction of the fields. "Well, you'll know me the next time you see me."

The afternoon of the following day the hoofs of his horse tore up half the cabbages in the front garden of Pilot Andersen.

The men, it had been agreed among the mothers, were not to be told about Mr. Brock's salutations in the field. But he had only kissed five of the girls, so it leaked out somehow. At all events there were two young fellows in sou'-westers smoking at the edge of a peat-stack when the proprietor appeared, and though they saw his horse wanted holding, they moved away toward the cliff without volunteering to help him.

"Here, you—come back and hold my horse, and be damned to you!" shouted Mr. Brock.

But the sou'-westers disappeared below the cliff, and tossing the reins to an elderly woman who came out from Andersen's door,

"Who are those fellows?" roared the proprietor. "They saw me, damn them, well enough."

"They are sons to me—both," said the woman, with her hands on the bridle.

"The first time I come across them I'll score their backs with my whip," he replied, his red face blazing with wrath, as he put his head in at the door.

The mother pursed her lips, but kept hold upon the bridle as she added, quietly,

"The lads 'll no' stand that, sir, frae ony man."

Mr. Brock seeing nothing inside the cot to reward his acquaintance, traversed the garden and applied his toe to the next door. It flew open, and the sunlight poured in upon the exasperating visage of an old man in a serge jacket and red nightcap, intent upon the sole of a sea-boot to which he was diligently administering blows. The satyr was looking for the nymphs, and this vision disturbed him.

Truly these fisher-folks were sufficiently cool in their reception; no crowding to see him, no obeisance, the homage of indifference all that rewarded him.

The Lord of Lobster Keep made three more domiciliary visits in the same spirit, but the mothers had put their daughters out of sight, with an instinct of danger. So Mr. Brock took stock of his tenantry, and abused them from door to door, until he had arrived at the utmost edge of the hamlet. Here he saw something to abate his choler: a young matron carrying a pitcher of milk. He became amiable at once, and intercepted the young woman between her garden and her cottage door.

"I haven't seen you before," he observed, with husky affability, as he pinched her chin. "Who are you?"

"I'm Magnus's wife, sir," said the woman, courtesying, flushing, and evading him.

"And who the devil is Magnus?" he pursued, gripping her, and bringing his face to bear upon her cheek.

There was a struggle, a scream, and the bulky proprietor, disengaged from his prey, suddenly disappeared from view.

"I'm Magnus," said an explanatory voice, and a tall man in a sou'-wester and a brown beard stood between the young wife and the prostrate proprietor.

Mr. Brock had never been interfered with in that way before. He rose, emitted a snort like an enraged bull, picked up his whip, and charged his assailant. It was no use. He disappeared rather more rapidly than before, and still Magnus stood on the pathway.

And now the cottage doors were lined with visages, the horse meanwhile being visible on the moor, scampering toward the keep.

"I'll root out every man, woman, and child on this cliff!" shrieked Mr. Hew Brock, as he turned and strode homeward through the heather.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

MR. FRAZER expected some communication to be made to him that evening after Sir Neil Dutton and his daughter had been to the town of Cagliari together; so did Lady Dutton. The baronet usually had a great deal to say after his excursions ashore. The reticence of Mr. Frazer was not always inspiriting at the saloon table. It was apt to produce long pauses, during which each one was inwardly calculating what his thoughts were, and what he would be likely to say next. It is the penalty of reticence that it is always open to misconstruction. How are you to know in the absence of the human voice that it does not cover an attitude of aggression or positive hostility? Sir Neil Dutton, however, was not made of the stuff which suspects latent unfriendliness under any attitude. He was generally conscious of so much benevolent intention to all his neighbors that suspicion of their feelings toward himself had no room in his mind.

But that evening they dined in comparative silence so far as Sir Neil was concerned. His attentions to Caroline were quiet and continuous, and her looks expressed so much subdued meaning that Mr. Frazer and Lady Dutton were both aware that a crisis had occurred in the relationship of the young people.

"I am afraid that Sardinia has a dispiriting effect upon you," said her ladyship, "it is so very dull and Old World. I shall not be sorry to be out to sea again."

"It has a very bad effect upon the crew," responded Mr. Frazer, attempting a little conversation in the unwonted absence of remark from Sir Neil.

The steward apparently took the observation as personally directed to himself, for he motioned to his assistant nervously, and the latter hastening to obey his summons at the saloon door, deposited himself and a trayful of fruit on the floor behind Mr. Frazer's chair, and everybody was aware of a bumping of apples and oranges and peaches against their feet.

"I suspect," said Lady Dutton, ignoring the circumstance, with an increased stoniness of expression which showed how strongly conscious she was of the occurrence, "they find themselves obliged to drink when they are near shore."

"They are not allowed to drink"—and Mr. Frazer saying so looked wrathfully at the steward—"but they seem to find means of being supplied;" and the conversation stopped again.

The truth was that the yacht was beginning to suffer the demoralization that is apt to overtake the best crews when they are much in proximity with the shore. It tries the best of seamen to be always posing among clean brasses in picturesque costume; and there are so many ways of evading the rule of teetotalism devised by the "bosses" in the cabin-end. There is the boat, for example, which comes off with the stucco images; well, no one can hinder

the fore-castle hand buying an image; but what is easier than to smuggle aboard a couple of bottles of bad rum at the same time? There is the tobacco boat, with its piles of fruit in the stern, and the tanned old man with bead-like eyes takes what he can get for his goods. He will supply a villainous concoction of native wine and spirits with the same alacrity as he supplies fruit; he will only take a jersey for it. Then when the yacht is at rest all the evils of authority seem to break loose. The engineering department falls foul of the navigating department, and a stoker finds it necessary in defense of his oily chief to give a fore-mast hand a couple of black eyes. The cook's assistant, who thinks himself a much more useful member of the community than the boys in gold buttons from the cabin-end, spills soups on the young gentlemen's boots; and revenge is not long in taking a definite and tangible shape if there are old oranges, bottles, jam-pots, waste sardine-boxes at hand. A spirit of mischief and of intrigue rules all up and down the crew until the fires are once more lit in the stoke-holes, and the breeze of the sea is sweeping through the ropes.

"If you desire it, Lady Dutton, we can get up steam in a couple of hours," said Mr. Frazer, in the interval of one of the pauses which had set in with great force, while Caroline cast languishing eyes on Sir Neil, and he rewarded her with glances in kind.

"Have you nothing to say to that proposal, Neil?"

"To what proposal, mother?" responded Sir Neil, vacantly, his mind wholly absorbed with a different topic.

"Carry, my dear, I appeal to you," continued Lady Dutton. "Are we to leave Cagliari to-night? Have you seen everything? Or would you prefer to stay?"

"It is for your ladyship to decide," said Mr. Frazer, seeing that his daughter had as little initiative in the matter as Sir Neil.

"Then I think we had better go to sea again."

"Our next address will be Ajaccio," added Mr. Frazer. "Let them have a boat, steward, to take letters ashore to the agents; and tell the captain to get up steam as soon as he likes."

Sir Neil was fairly roused, now that there was talk of going to sea again, and said, "I admire the way you do things, Mr. Frazer; there's something Napoleonic about your swift decisions. I for one shall like nothing better than going to Ajaccio to see where Napoleon himself was cradled. I think I can answer for Carry, too," he added, and the secret was out. He had never used her maiden name before. Neither Lady Dutton nor Mr. Frazer any longer doubted that their son and daughter understood each other.

Some hours later the masthead and side lights were adjusted, the anchor was drawn, and the yacht, with every man at his post, was heading for the Strait of Bonifacio.

Sir Neil had bidden his mother good-night, leaving her with a broad hint of the engagement, which it surprised him to find she was obtuse enough not to seem to understand. With Mr. Frazer he took a different course.

They had been walking up and down the deck for some time in silence, when the baronet paused at the deck-house door with the words, "I have something to say to you of importance." The capitalist stepped in and took his seat at the table, under the swing

lamp. Sir Neil, leaning on his elbows opposite him, opened the conversation.

"We seem to have known each other a long time, Mr. Frazer, though it only counts by weeks as yet. What I have to say to you assumes that we have known each other for a long time." Mr. Frazer smiled, anticipating what was coming. "I have this very evening told Caroline that I love her, and she has consented to be my wife."

There was nothing at the moment Mr. Frazer could have better wished Sir Neil to say. There was, however, an astounding directness about the announcement that rather took away his breath. If he was not really surprised, it had all the effect of surprise upon him. His usually impassive face showed strong manifestations of feeling. After all, Caroline was his only daughter; and here was a young man whose pale, eager face was not unpleasant to look at even under the new light of being a possible son-in-law, but who, as a claimant for his daughter's affections, rather struck him at the moment as being an interloper. Mr. Frazer was an old and tried man of the world, who had entered the deck-house knowing the nature of the communication that awaited him. His eye glistened, however, as he looked at the baronet.

"Man, she's but a lassie," he said, in a tremulous voice.

Sir Neil was touched with the fatherly exclamation.

"But I thought it right to tell you at once, Mr. Frazer, what our feelings are, and that we have confessed them to each other. I don't talk just now of marriage. She is, as you say, 'but a lassie.' I hope, however, you will allow her to choose in this matter for herself."

Mr. Frazer was himself again in a twinkling. He had no mind for his daughter to be loved by a young man and marriage not to be talked of.

"Oh, yes, she will choose for herself, Sir Neil—she will be allowed to choose. I will put no stumbling-block in my daughter's way. You only surprise me with your suddenness."

"I know I am hardly entitled to speak to you on the subject," replied the young man, "but you have interested yourself so much in my affairs, you have done so much for us, and I have been drawn so much to your daughter, that I could not choose but tell you how I feel. Besides, I am no longer young. I feel that I should begin to be placed in life; and as I have no desire for a mere life of pleasure, the sooner I am placed the better."

"You are twenty-six, I think?"

"I am some months past it, and Caroline is—"

"Nineteen. You are not a man of passing fancies, Sir Neil; I can say that from my own observation. I can say more. I think of all the young men of my acquaintance I could select none that I could intrust my daughter's welfare to with more confidence. I think you both should have every prospect of a long life of happiness and usefulness before you. You will go into Parliament, of course?"

"I must get Boulderstone in order first. I should never be able to do useful public work with the feeling that my estates were in a bad way."

"To be sure, to be sure; but there will be no difficulty. Caroline is not a 'tocherless' girl."

This assurance seemed to make Sir Neil a little unhappy.

"I think you will believe me, Mr. Frazer, when I say that any thought of Caroline's fortune has not been in my mind at all. If she had not a penny to her fortune I should be quite as anxious to marry her."

The rich man liked the answer: he foresaw that there was to be no difficulty about settlements; it was the assurance at the same time that his daughter had fallen into the hands of one who, valuing her for her personal qualities, would treat her with attention and affection.

"To be sure not. I would not suspect you of fortune-hunting. Far from it. I know you to be a gentleman and a man of honor. But that my girl is not altogether tocherless you will find to be a good thing in your public career." Mr. Frazer could not help presenting even his daughter in her best marketable light to the young man who was bidding for her hand. "And you will be all the better, too, with your opinions about speculations on the Stock Exchange," he mused aloud, reverting to an earlier conversation. "You can give undivided attention to public affairs; you may be Premier yet," he added, rising in the deck-house and planting his hand on Sir Neil's shoulder.

The baronet simply asked, "You are satisfied with me, then?"

"I think you will do; and I can safely affirm that Caroline has qualities of heart and head that will be of great use to you in life. I further think that you may aspire to a high place in politics. Indeed, I may say that your name has frequently been before the party managers, to my certain knowledge. Had you any plans of your own?"

"I had no plans. Before my father died I had intended to travel in the United States for six months. Indeed I had engaged with myself to be there now. One must know the United States to understand the political future of England. With the discovery, however, that our affairs were so miserably mixed up, I had to abandon the idea."

"You should see the States," replied Mr. Frazer, after some moments of reflection.

CHAPTER XIII.

JUNIPER BANK.

BERTHA ST. CLAIR lived a little out of Boulderstone. Before the river came into the town at all it made a circuitous sweep between banks yellow with broom and purple heather. Near the summit of the bank of the river behind the town Bertha had a cottage of her own. She had lived in it now for seven years; her father had died in it; it was a spot she loved for its own sweet sake as well as for the memories that had begun to cluster round it. The roof of the house was almost level with the summit of the bank on a natural terrace of its own, and steps led down from it to a spacious garden, planted in a ravine safe from the encroachments of the river. Her

cottage had only one story, but it was roomy enough for her. Her kitchen looked upon a narrow poultry-yard; her bedroom and sitting-room windows commanded the Boulder. And she had another little room to spare; the servant-maid slept in it. Bertha bestowed a great deal of care upon her cottage. In the warm shelter she found that the fuchsias grew luxuriantly. Roses, too, came to splendid maturity right in front of her windows; the scent of them was the first greeting she got in the autumn evenings when she returned from the charity-school. As for the garden down in the ravine, it was strictly a useful place for the encouragement of gooseberries, blackberries, and apples, as well as vegetables, for Bertha's father had tried to establish himself as a market gardener before he died, and the fertile ravine was the subject of his experiments.

Bertha's father had not been a great success in life. He had tried a great many things in a great many places, both in the new world of the antipodes and in the old world of London.

He had gathered a little money, too, but all the use he made of it was to try his claim to a remnant of an estate on the other side of the county from Boulderstone, and to fail in his attempt. His lack of funds brought the case to a summary conclusion, though there were opinions in the Edinburgh Parliament-house favoring his claim. He had come to Boulderstone a comparatively poor man after his disappointment, and made what he could out of the few acres that surrounded "Juniper Bank," and the garden in the ravine.

Bertha had early learned to clear her mind of all thought of the righteousness of the claim, though her father spent much of the later years of his life in talking as if he had been the victim of a grievous injustice. She early learned that if each day was to produce for her a certain amount of happiness it must carry its own portion of work; and fortunately for her she had not far to seek.

But when her father died, the acres that had been let with the cottage were withdrawn at her own request. She could not unaided attend to them; it was all she could do, indeed, to keep the ravine in order, by the help of certain stout arms from the foreshore, and by handing on the produce to be gathered and sold by the fruiterer in the square.

Bertha had not many wants of her own to supply, and if the seasons had not been treacherous she might have made the ravine garden supply most of them. Years ago, however, she had observed that other people, with smaller wants than even she had, were often compelled to go unsupplied. When little Jackie Thomson stepped up the hill one raw, wintery afternoon, his feet bare, and two buttons all that kept his blue chapped skin from the cold, Bertha had taken the message the boy carried, and gone back immediately to the tailor's, and paid for such woollen garments as had never been on the boy's back before. When a succession of little boys were sent up the hill, however, in a similar condition, Bertha was unable to make the contents of her purse stretch the length of her sympathy. Willingly, if she had been able, would she have wrapped the shivering little fellows in the warmest clothing, but she was poor. That was the beginning of a new experience in her life. Her father, who had what to her was the strange, inexplicable pride of

being a "country gentleman," though unrecognized, mixed as little with the Boulderstone folks as his necessities would let him. And he would have his daughter confine herself as much as possible to Juniper Bank. As for her mother, Bertha did not so much as recollect her, though she knew, from a photograph which hung over her bedroom mantel-piece, that she resembled her in face and figure. She had died when Bertha was quite a child; and her father, who only cared to speak of his misfortunes, rarely alluded to her. Often the daughter had tried to bring him back to happier recollections by allusions to his early years of married life; but a sigh and a long fit of silence was the only response she got.

So it was only after her father's death that Bertha was free to follow up the poverty to its source, and found that the foreshore of Boulderstone had many a tale of hunger and nakedness. The spectacle of misery had no sooner touched her than she began to feel a strange uneasiness and longing.

For the first time Bertha felt the bitterness of her own lack of means; she could not help others as she would like. Her father had never taken any interest in helping any one, and she found no ally in the town itself who seemed able to do comprehensively what she herself would have liked.

But for all that Bertha's tall figure and her market-basket became very well known in the neighborhood of the church-yard.

Years before she came out of her teens she had carried fresh eggs, her fruit, and her flowers, through lanes of sou'-westers and oil-skins, baskets of hand-lines and basins of bait, to rooms where she knew there was ill-luck and hunger. But that she found was not enough by itself to help the misery which so often dejected her. She had her reward for her spontaneous acts of kindness; many a face she hardly recognized brightened on her as she passed through the lower parts of Boulderstone. She became vaguely conscious, too, of little fishermen pausing in their game of marbles to repeat her name as she went by them; and more than once a hard-featured woman had come to Juniper Bank with a cut of turbot for which she refused to be paid.

There was something pleasant in all that. Bertha, who, so far as the middle-class portion of the town were concerned, had been strangely isolated, liked to feel herself loved by those humbler ones who knew her. But their affection did not satisfy her. It was not mere luxury of emotion Bertha desired, once she became truly alive to the misery in other people's lives. She hoped for active good to them, and as she got older the bitterness of feeling how little she could do grew upon her.

"If I were but a man," she would think to herself, unconscious of the splendor of womanliness that glowed in her own sweet face and diffused itself from her simplest walk and gesture—"if I were but a man, I could do so much."

It was under that impulse of desiring to help the weak neighbors of the foreshore that she was induced to call upon the parish minister and ask help.

The Rev. James Petersen, tall, stout, dark-eyed, kind, and lazy, received Bertha with much cordiality. Loving his own wife up-

rightly and sincerely, the Rev. James was still not unsusceptible to the charms of a fresh young female presence in his study.

"You should join our Dorcas Society, Miss St. Clair," he told her, through a cloud of smoke which she would not allow him to curtail. "I am sure you might intercept many a petticoat and pinafore, that now go to Madagascar, with great advantage to your clients in the biggins."

Bertha liked Mr. Petersen. His large, genial presence seemed to make it easier for her to think of lessening the bulk of the want outside her. Anything that was generous and kind seemed possible under the humorous gleam of his dark eyes. The minister had not been quite sure when Bertha made her appearance that it was not something troubling her "soul" that he might be obliged to look to. He knew that Bertha was not on his membership roll, and he thought at least he would be asked to pray with her.

It was a peculiar pleasure to him, therefore, to find that instead of a hysterical young girl, trembling under the terrors of the law, he had before him a fresh, sensible creature with an egg-basket, who would not hear of him stopping his smoke.

Still Bertha, if she did not apply to him for the consolations of his ministry, was greatly more earnest than he. Without one conscious thought of Christianity or Church system in her mind, she was burning with something like a religious enthusiasm. She wanted to be up and doing; but how to be up and what to do she had not been able to tell herself.

"Join the Dorcas Society," urged the minister; "you will be the better of meeting the young ladies of the congregation, and the young gentlemen too," he added, slyly.

"But I should like to do something better than sewing for the poor people, something more lasting than petticoats and pinafores; I want to teach."

"My dear young lady, you are just in time," said Mr. Petersen; "here is the charity-school vacant. I am pledged to nobody. I have influence enough to get you it. Will you take it?"

And Bertha took it, and for some years the work of her life had been the work we have seen her pursuing in the little diamond-paned school-house. The attendance at the "Dorcas Society" had not been so successful. For one thing, it was opened and closed with prayers, and Bertha could not avoid the conclusion that the ladies who prayed were performing. Then the hour and a half they spent together among cotton and flannel seemed to Bertha full of ill-natured episodes. Bertha, out of the fullness of the knowledge of the foreshore, mentioned several cases of want to the society, when she had her ears regaled with the most astounding tales of drunkenness and dissoluteness which had brought it about.

"But," said Bertha, "a person does not need to be good to be entitled to a little flannel in the winter-time. I should think it was enough to be cold and in want."

Whereupon there was such a clattering of tongues that she was fain to leave the table altogether. She was so definitely and insultingly prayed for before the meeting came to an end that she thought it better henceforward to go about her own work in her own way; and she was none the more popular on that account, though the

minister fought for her good-humoredly all over his parish when critical tongues were wagging.

But by the time Bertha appears in this history the load of her responsibilities has indefinitely increased. Notwithstanding that Boulderstone as a township was sufficiently prosperous, it seemed to Bertha that there must be more to do in it than anywhere else. Day by day the burden of her anxiety grew. From merely wishing to relieve a case of distress here and there, Bertha had come to conceive plans for the betterment of the whole foreshore. Why should the fisher-people of Boulderstone pass so much of their lives in the evil-smelling misery of their badly-floored rooms? Why should they have so few gleams of happiness, except what they got in the sanded floors of the Whale's Head? The more she tasted the joys of the passing seasons at the side of the Boulder—each season bringing to her its own wealth of color, sound and fragrance from sunsets and greenery, river and song-birds, roses and mint—the more she felt that there was an element of exclusiveness in her happiness that touched it with the poignancy of positive misery. It was not until she had discovered that two or three small *protégés* at a time might be made to share the happiness of her home that she was latterly able to reconcile herself to the comparative wealth of Juniper Bank. She had brought more than one of her own little pupils, when he was just off the sick-list, to recruit beside her. It was the cause of several sharp quarrels with her domestics; a succession of them declined to have poor boys and girls on their hands while she was teaching in town; but Bertha's sympathies were based on a firm, strong will, and she let one after another of her servants go, until she found in one a coadjutor whose heart was stronger than her prejudices. In her zeal to be of use to people outside her, Bertha found that she must have funds to help her. Captain Jansen had been one of the few friends her father recognized in Boulderstone. Him she always retained; and, indeed, from being her adviser at first, she had gradually become his—the captain's love for the girl latterly taking the shape of acquiescence in all the schemes that she proposed.

It was Captain Jansen's unacknowledged hope that some day Bertha would reward him by accepting himself, but he stood a little in awe of her. There was that in her which, in her most familiar intercourse with others, preserved her from rough familiarities. Not that Captain Jansen was the man to press such attentions upon any woman. In his estimation there was a sacredness about womanhood, and his conviction took the form of a humble demeanor whenever he was in their presence. His humility was not awkwardness, but was a perfectly sincere feeling that he, a rough, bearded man, used to command rough, bearded men, was something essentially different from a woman—something inferior, because coarser.

Bertha, however, had broached so many schemes to him for helping people on the foreshore that he had come to know her better than he had ever dreamed of knowing any of her sex.

It is Captain Jansen who is stepping up the river-side this autumn evening to Juniper Bank as Bertha, with hammer in hand, nails up a refractory rose which has broken loose from its place above her cottage porch.

CHAPTER XIV.

SEPARATION.

THE yacht was two days in making Ajaccio, coasting most of the time. For Caroline the days were passed in a state of subdued ecstasy. It was not the first time the girl had known the attentions of men, young and old. Even at Brighton she had more than once escaped the surveillance of her teachers, and allowed herself the liberty of a little flirtation on the West Pier with handsome strangers. She had sat for an hour one bright afternoon listening to the talk of a tall young gentleman with a wonderful mustache who had persuaded her to take coffee and cognac in one of the pavilion-like refreshment-rooms; and after the young gentleman had left her, the bar-maid told her she had been speaking with a lord. More than once her hand had since been asked. A salmon-colored old gentleman, with the frost of seventy winters on his brow, had bid for her; but her father, knowing the private life of the bidder, eschewed his wealth, and advised him to seek for a wife elsewhere. A young advocate, who really cared for her, and who had seen her to her carriage through a whole winter's assemblies in Edinburgh, made a proposal in all good faith. But the advocate was comparatively poor, and it had not yet been determined among the Queen Street clique of writers whether he was to be allowed to make a reputation at the bar. Mr. Frazer did not consider the pleadings he had read in connection with criminal circuits entitled him to aspire to Caroline's hand. So he got the cold shoulder.

Caroline was never much moved on these occasions. She said the old gentleman with frosty hair was "real nice" to her. She told her father that he was "very particular" when he spoke disparagingly of the advocate; and, with some terror, she more than half suspected that he would like to wed her to a doctor of divinity who carried snuff in his left waistcoat-pocket, and who had a habit of glaring at her through benevolent spectacles for some minutes at a time.

It was on the back of these experiences that her liking for Chartreuse and kindred sweet liquors again broke out. And some unseemly outbursts of laughter in which she had indulged during an unusually large assemblage of white-chokered divines in her father's dining-room, induced him to look up a long-neglected aunt and to place Caroline under her care for some time. The girl had forgotten her liking for tempting stimulants during those later weeks; and now that the baronet's mother had admitted her to the familiarities of a daughter, counseling her, under the light of that relationship, with advice taken from the severest code of social and Christian morality, she found the companionship of Sir Neil Dutton an experience comparatively fresh in her life. She was not very open to external influence, but in the presence of Sir Neil she seemed to be gifted with a new power to realize things. And these two days on the coast of Corsica passed like a golden dream.

The young people were engaged. They had purchased the right to find out such sequestered nooks of the deck as there were, and, in the interval of a caressing attention to each other, to look on the beautiful world with beating hearts.

The yacht never went far from the shore, so there were ever vaguely present to them the gray mountains, which came down to the sea in precipices, and were kissed with the gentlest fringe of white waves; the sky overhead untouched by a single fleck of passing cloud; the shimmering sea, where the dolphins were tumbling in the sunlight, bluer than the heavens. From their awning not far from the wheel the lovers spent many hours dreamily viewing these things. There were moments in which past and future were not. It was a dream of love and of the present. Even the beating of the screw and the tramp of the men as they came aft to the wheel were sounds borne in to the lovers' ears as from a world with which they were not associated. Their love was the old, old slavery of young hearts in young frames—a bondage of tenderness which knit their whole being in one.

Once or twice as they sat mutely looking on the sea, a whiff of the olive gardens borne to them from the shore, and a yellow shore-bird lighting for a second or two on the taffrail, Sir Neil read to her passages from Byron.

But he was forced to shut the book and fall back upon his sensations. Byron seemed commonplace for the moment. And so matters fared till they cast anchor before Ajaccio.

Mr. Frazer did not expect to get much conversation out of his future son-in-law so long as the first fever of his affection was on him; and it lasted all the time they were in Ajaccio. True, the party went up on the citadel and looked on the sea; went into the municipal buildings and read the parish register of Napoleon's birth; took wine under the acacias in the great square, where there are still remains of the house where he was born; and had an evening promenade in the Botanic Gardens, which were once the property of his father. The baronet did not, however, rise to the occasion. All Ajaccio was out the evening they spent in the Botanic Gardens, and it might have been the Tuileries they were in, so French was the music, so French were the fashions, so entirely French were the walk and conversation of the olive-cheeked, polite, and sedate Corsicans.

"It's a wee bit of a place to have produced so big a man," reflected Mr. Frazer aloud, looking round upon the high-heeled, crimson skirted women, and the dandy young government officials, passing splendid on less than forty pounds a year. "It must have been a fluke," he repeated, shortly afterward, when the young people gave him no answer, "a freak of nature; he will have no successor, at any rate, from this crowd."

But Sir Neil was devising some new attention to Caroline, and though Caroline heard her father, she considered it judicious to ignore him.

"Ah, well," he added, a little impatient at length, amid his gratification, "I'll away and look about me."

And the next time they met was nearer midnight on the deck of the yacht.

They were nearly a week in Ajaccio; and at the end of that time Lady Dutton was beginning to weary, and Mr. Frazer's presence being required in Scotland, they set out for Marseilles.

"I must have Neil two whole hours to myself, Carry," said Lady Dutton one morning on the cruise between Corsica and the south of France. Since he has been engaged to you he has hardly spoken to me. I am not jealous, my dear. I know men never do things by halves; and it can't, in the nature of things, last forever. You are better to take advantage of all the attentions you can get so long as they are offered to you. But I must see Neil this morning to talk to him about our future arrangements. You will not come on deck then till I have done. I shall make the talk as brief as possible."

And Caroline retiring to her cabin, the mother and son soon sat on pleasant deck-chairs, out of the glare of the light, he smoking lazily while she conversed.

"You have not made any definite arrangements as yet, Neil, about—about your marriage?"

"We haven't fixed a time yet. I shall leave that to Carry and her father."

"Carry, of course, will have—will have a considerable"—(Lady Dutton hesitated, but her son did not help her out)—"will have," she resumed, "a considerable fortune."

Sir Neil rose, went to the taffrail, and shook the ashes from his cigar.

"I have not the faintest conception of Carry's fortune, mother; I have not asked about it; I shall not ask."

He was annoyed at his mother more than she feared he would be.

"But, my dear Neil, Mr. Frazer is a man of business, and it is quite high time that you should understand what arrangements he is to make for her. He is reputed a millionaire. You will, of course, hold out for a marriage-portion which bears some relationship to the whole amount of his—his savings. You could not be put off with less than a third."

Sir Neil made no reply; and his face, except that it was as grave and as impassive as might be, gave no indication of the current of his thoughts and feelings.

Lady Dutton paused, and then continued:

"I should lose no time, Neil, in bringing Mr. Frazer to the point with regard to settlements. Business men are apt to value money more than people who have not been in the habit of working for it. And they take narrow views sometimes, when it comes to parting with it—their sense of ownership is so very keen."

At that moment Mr. Frazer softly approached from the deck-house.

"My dear Mr. Frazer," said Lady Dutton, in a persuasive voice, "I have just been deploring with my son the break-up of our party. I know that I am in some measure responsible for it. I could find it in my heart, for the young people's sake, to be a lifetime on this summer sea—the dolphins, don't you know, the precious colors, the healthy sea-breeze."

"Well, if your ladyship should care to lengthen the trip, I would arrange for the yacht being kept in good sea-going order. Business necessitates my return to Scotland."

"Ah! business," exclaimed her ladyship, sentimentally. "But, by the way, Neil has just been saying to me that—"

Her son looked at her with a flash in his dark eye that warned Lady Dutton she had better not improvise anything in connection with marriage-settlements.

"I declare," finished her ladyship in an irrelevant manner, "the yacht is beginning to lurch."

Sir Neil instinctively turned to the cabin door for Caroline, but she did not appear.

"Caroline will go on to Scotland with you, of course," said Lady Dutton, piqued at her son, and determined to say what she thought would make him most unhappy for the moment.

Mr. Frazer, who had not before contemplated the prospect, answered, "that would maybe be best. She will spend the winter in Edinburgh with her father, I think," he added, for no other reason than that, being a business man, he always liked to look as if he had a definite programme before him.

"I shall winter in the Riviera somewhere," rejoined Lady Dutton—"possibly at Bordighera; only I am told the little place is getting overcrowded. If not at Bordighera, certainly at Mentone. I do not feel that I could face a winter in London or in the North. As for you, Neil, I presume you will go back to Paris or Vienna and study political situations?"

"Caroline shall decide," said Sir Niel, quietly.

"Well, now," remarked Mr. Frazer, "Caroline is not exactly qualified to decide. You may depend upon it that Caroline will ask you to be in or near Edinburgh. I would let other considerations decide. You spoke to me concerning a plan you entertained of going to the United States. Would it not advance your political prospects if you were to carry out that plan?"

Sir Niel was perfectly sincere in his love for Caroline; he had not contemplated so speedy a separation; though he knew that they could not see so much of each other after the cruise came to an end, he expected that for some time at least they would be near. There was something that seemed to tell him they ought to know each other better; for all he as yet definitely knew was that she had a languid, inviting eye, and cheeks like a well-sunned peach. So far as character could be revealed by speech, he was as much outside her nature as he had been when he first met her at Palermo. He loved her, however, and had been more closely drawn to her than to any of the ladies who had tried to fascinate him during the later years of his roaming. But Mr. Frazer's speech induced a new train of ideas. He was, he felt, on the threshold of life. He had probably a long career before him. Love was something in that career, but it was not to be everything. It should not be allowed to count for everything. If he were to do public work, he must not be turned aside from the path that led to it, even if it were his future wife that stood in the way and beckoned to him. "One can see a great deal now in a few months," he mused aloud. "Perhaps Carry would not mind about a few months' absence."

At that moment Carry's head became visible on the cabin stair. Lady Dutton saw her, and exclaimed,

"Oh, you may come now, Caroline; we have made all our arrangements. You are to have a voice in them."

Sir Neil rose hastily to bring her inside the group.

"Caroline," pursued Lady Dutton, still piqued, "he is going to America."

"Are we to be—" and Caroline faltered.

"Child, it is business *versus* love, and love has to go to the wall for a day."

"I wish you would not put things in their very worst light, mother."

"My dear Neil, you know we ought to face what is before us bravely. The arrangements are, Caroline, that you return to Edinburgh with your father; that Neil goes to the prairies; that I—well, that I abide by the Riviera."

Caroline's lip quivered, and she seemed on the verge of shedding a tear, when a wave splashed up the side of the yacht, and sent its shower of spray over the group. All handkerchiefs were then in request, so that the amount of the girl's emotion, measured in tears, was not apparent.

The arrangements were, however, final; and one Saturday afternoon, three weeks later, Mr. Frazer and his daughter had waved an adieu to Sir Neil Dutton from the steam-tender of the "Italia," the ocean-going vessel setting out for New York from the crowd of ships in the roadstead at Greenock.

CHAPTER XV.

BERTHA'S DREAM.

BERTHA was still standing, hammer in hand, nailing up the climbing rose, when Captain Jansen descended the bank and stopped in front of her cottage. It was one of the lovely autumn evenings which make the birds think it is spring again. Bertha's valley was echoing to the shrill utterances of a chaffinch; a mavis was pouring out his mellow notes from the topmost twigs of the thicket that lay between her garden and the river; down in the bed of the amber stream sand-pipers flew along the margin and called to each other plaintively.

"You have the Indian summer, ma'am, here. We see none of this further down," said the captain, quietly. Bertha looked round, and saw her friend surveying the valley with a glance of unmixed pleasure.

"I'm so glad to see you, Captain Jansen. I have a great deal to talk about."

"Thank you, ma'am; at your service. I thought I'd look in to-night. It struck me there was a thing or two I might do for you in connection with the gas company."

"Why, where's Oscar, captain?" asked Bertha, descending from her chair, and catching a look of Fidget smelling the visitor's boots in a gingerly, disappointed manner.

"Ah! Oscar; I shut him up. When the dogs get together they do a lot of damage among the flower-beds. I was afraid to bring him."

At that moment there was the sound of hard and rapid breathing on the walk. Fidget rushed away, and there stood Oscar, his red tongue protruding from his mouth, and a very guilty expression in his face.

Bertha laughed, Oscar took courage and elevated his tail, approaching in a cautious, tentative manner, while Fidget gamboled all over his head and neck, barked, and made general welcome for him.

"You should be put in irons, you scoundrel," said the captain, eying his follower with an effort at moral severity.

The dog saw that he was forgiven, shot forward, and leaped at his master. Fidget then withdrew with him to show him the mysteries of the garden. The captain had dressed himself for his visit to Bertha as he used to dress when his seamen rowed him ashore at a foreign port. He looked less like a seafaring man than a shore-going member of some profession, owing to the tallness of his hat, the immaculate blackness of his corded silk tie, and the newness of his blue-black coat.

"Sit down, Captain Jansen," said Bertha, presently, motioning him to a garden lounge of wicker-work. "The night keeps so sweet and fresh I think we might talk a little here, at least until tea is ready."

The captain removed his hat and held it on his knee. It was as if he were returning thanks for a blessing showered on him. His hair was thick and auburn yet; his pleasant face shone.

Bertha could not help smiling on him as he sat. She had accidentally broken off a rosebud, which was struggling into life late in the season. It lay on the shingle at her feet. She stooped to pick it up, and beaming on the captain, she approached and fastened it in his coat. There was not a suggestion of coquetry in the girl's action. She had often done the same thing to her father. But she had no sooner adorned the captain than her cheeks crimsoned, and she became self-conscious.

As for Captain Jansen, had their very knees not touched each other as she stooped over him to place the rosebud? Was the breath of her lips not wafted to his cheek? How could he help supposing that he might speak a little of his love?

But Bertha, growing pale after her rush of self-consciousness, stepped into the cottage rapidly, and the captain was left with his rosebud in his coat, the chaffinches caroling among the trees, the sand-pipers mourning by the river, and a hundred turbulent thoughts in his own breast.

When Bertha returned, it was with tea-cups and buttered bread.

"And now, captain, you will tell me what it is you propose to do about the gas company;" and Bertha stood, cup in hand, looking at him with a direct, almost cold glance. Captain Jansen rose uneasily to his feet; it made him uncomfortable to feel that Bertha was serving him--waiting on him, as it were.

What had happened to her in the mean time that she should look at him with eyes so severe? John Jansen was puzzled, for he was unlearned in the ways of womankind. He sighed gently as he took up the thread of Bertha's remark.

"About the gas company, ma'am; I thought you might like to

have a pipe brought up the hill to your rooms. It would save a world of trouble with the lamps. Though I never use gas myself, I know it saves a deal of trouble."

But Bertha would not have her pure cottage tainted with gas-pipes. No, she would not like to have workmen carrying them up the hill. Was not Captain Jansen inconsistent to recommend to others what he would not take for himself? She liked to keep her house so fresh that the bees finding their way in at the open window only discovered their mistake from the absence of flowers.

Captain Jansen looked disturbed, felt mechanically at the rose-bud in his coat, as if it were somehow the cause of a change in the conversation for which he could not account.

Bertha was quick to note his look of dejection, so drawing her chair close by the garden lounge, she invited the captain to be seated again, and for herself she forgot the self-consciousness and the cause of it in her desire to make him happy.

"I have really kept you from going to sea, then?" said Bertha, after a pause in the discussion of genial nothings.

"You've done more, Miss Bertha; you've given me no cause to regret it. I've booked myself for shore-going life, and I believe I'll enjoy it. But, you know, the sea has been everything to me since I let go my mother's apron-strings. I can't explain it to you; but when a man's bread has been cast upon the waters so long, the hard, fixed earth seems deadness to him. I owe it to you that it will not be with me as with many another man who falls to using the bottle to keep the moving of the sea in his legs. You've given me something to do."

Bertha's views of life were almost wholly of her own forming. She had been brought up among secular people; she had never had the story of Galilee or the scheme of the universe presented to her heart or imagination with any power. When her feelings, therefore, were touched, it was not because she felt herself in harmony with the world of theological maxims, and in conscious co-operation with a first principle. What she knew of these things she knew vaguely as a matter of feeling, and of half unacknowledged longing. Her nature was essentially sympathetic; it was naturally wholesome, and she rejoiced in preferring the true to the false, the right to the wrong, because so she was born and existed. The captain's confession of the good she did him touched a moral fiber in her, however, which vibrated through her whole being.

"You could not say anything to Captain Jansen, that would reward me better than that assurance. And something tells me that you will never regret your choice. Listen to my dream of Boulderstone, and you will understand. It came to me under the cross of the auld kirk years ago. It has never left me. Well, I looked round from the gravestones on the windows of the foreshore, and I saw many faces. They were white and thin and sad. The women were going out and in at the doorways, and their backs were bent. They carried burdens of turf, and children were clinging to their scanty skirts. There were many glances from the windows and sounds from the doorways, but not one that was not sorrowful. Nowhere could my eye catch a face which seemed to have known happiness. It was as if they had been weeping for years, and they had nothing

to show for their lives but hard and tear-dried faces. And just then the sun shone upon the graves and upon the windows, and I would have wept if I had dared; for is it for this, I asked myself, that the children are at the windows, and the women are bowing their backs under their burdens? Is it to be carried from misery to silence, and that the sun may shine upon their tombstones, that they are now moving out and in among the lanes? And I thought of the cold church-pews, and the bell in the clock-tower rang, and I knew there was a message of another life and another world; but the mockery of it! A message to these bowed backs, to these pale children. How dared any one tell them of peace and happiness when the tombstones told them what they were coming to? The burden and the chill and the pinching wrote on their tearless faces what they were. And I turned from the windows of the foreshore and looked to the sea. There it lay, blue and peaceful, and the wild birds feeding on its bosom. The ships were sailing on it, the boats were plying their oars. It feeds the sea-birds, it gives a pathway to the ships; why should it not yield to the foreshore treasure enough to straighten the backs of the women, to put color in the cheeks of the children? The great, gracious sea! And leaning on the old cross, it came to me that the people of the foreshore were as children without any one to think for them. Children, indeed; for there came crew upon crew of great brown men down the lanes by the church-yard, home to their rooms with the dingy windows, to their pale children and bent women; and with the salt of the sea in their blood they laughed. How long would it last? I could see, for other crews were leaving the doorways, and the misery of their narrow hovels was written in their faces. They, too, would smile when the sea had blown upon them and tossed them. Children that they are, I thought, might they not be happy from the beginning to the end, if their lives were more beautiful? And as I looked at the gray walls of the foreshore it seemed to me that the windows bloomed with roses, that the faces of the babes became full and round, and that where the tearless eyes were there were now smiles and laughter. And the women carried in their burdens still, but it was with heads erect and with a smile on their lips. The men came out and went to their boats, but the goers-out were as cheerful as the comers-in. And the meaning of it all came upon me. They labored no longer to fatten this man and that in the square of Boulderstone, and to help him build villas on the margin of the river. They labored for themselves and for each other. What they drew from the sea they sold, and the payment was no longer made to them as a favor and a dole. The fruits of their toil were all their own. The generous sea gave them enough and to spare; with plenty they had health; and then the flowers bloomed in the windows, and their lanes were dry and sweet from the sea-breezes. But they needed some one to guide them and to teach them—children that they are. I dreamed it years ago," said Bertha, stopping short before she completed it, and withdrawing her eyes from the opposite bank and appealing plaintively to Captain Jansen, "and what of it has come true? On the foreshore there are, indeed, a few flower-pots in the windows. But the bowed backs and the pale faces—"

Bertha did not tell her waking dream without visible marks of

excitement. And the captain did not dare to interrupt her with remarks. The truth was, he felt profoundly unhappy, and wished most heartily that he were not the comfortable, well-dressed mortal he was. He became painfully conscious that the gloss on his black hat must be rather an aggravation than anything else in Bertha's eyes. He thought with bitterness of his gas shares, his house property, and his account in the bank. At the moment he would have courted poverty or anything to have her good opinion.

"I am far too rich," he broke in, suddenly, upon Bertha's silence.

"You are not too rich, Captain Jansen. Don't you see that if my dream is to be realized more money is needed? If the foreshore is to become the bower of my imagination there must be help given where it is required."

The captain's brow cleared as he turned to Bertha to tell her, "Everything I have you may freely use."

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

BOULDERSTONE CASTLE and park dominated the right bank of the river. The castle had two aspects. From the sea it looked a somewhat gloomy, Gothic institution, rearing its walls as gray, hard, and forbidding as a cliff. Originally it had been built in the teeth of the Atlantic, and on its seaward aspect the windows of the Gothic part of the castle still opened upon a broad bulwark of flint stone, against which the waves, at some seasons of the year, made long, surging attacks.

Its higher stories culminated in clusters of turrets, and the whole character of the architecture was somber and aggressive.

Inside it had the same character as outside. There was a large baronial kitchen, which was for the most part hewn from the bare rock of the foundations. The staircase that led from the level of the bulwarks to the high turrets was of bare sandstone, scooped with generations of footsteps, as by the tumbling of a stream. As you passed the doors in your ascent, you saw the wickets and the iron gratings of an earlier century. Some of the rooms were tapestried with themes drawn from the Sagas. The hall was full of antiquated furniture, the chimney-pieces and mantel-shelves solidly carved; grotesque mirrors of the sixteenth century lighting up the walls; and a perfect armory of weapons ranged high in the obscurity of the further end. You heard the boom of the sea in library, kitchen, hall, staircase, and bedrooms. The other aspect of the castle was wholly modern. Square windows looked through a series of stories, from a thick covering of ivy, upon the broad, green level of the park. So far as the shelter of the castle extended there were yews, limes, ash, and elms spreading themselves about. Further out, the wind that swept the park from the sea allowed no herbage but cropped grass.

There was a coziness both of exterior and interior in the modern building. Passing from its decorated rooms, its paintings, its burnished fire-places, its screens, and comparatively slim temporary

furnishings, to the solidity and gloom of the old castle, had the most curious effect on different minds.

The late Sir Neil Dutton used to test his guests by their preference for one or the other; and a historian who spent three months in a chamber prepared for him in the Gothic side of the castle had attributed much of the success of his descriptions to the spirit of the past conferred on him by the residence.

It was the spring of the year, and Sir Neil Dutton had returned from America. He had brought his mother from Riviera to Boulderstone, and he expected to be joined by Mr. Frazer and his daughter during the course of the week.

Lady Dutton had no great anxiety to return to her son's seat. From believing herself to be an invalid she had gradually developed into the most distressing kind of patient. She had become a valetudinarian.

To all outward appearance she was a robust, cold, dignified woman, with a long spell of years yet to run. It was her own conviction, however, or she affected the belief, that she was not long for this world. The consequence was that an immense amount of care and attention had to be bestowed on her ladyship. She was always exacting attention by a whole artillery of gasps, shudders, shrugs, coughs and frowns. Under such circumstances, much of her time was of course passed in her boudoir; but when she chose to bestow her company elsewhere, the occupants of the room were made immediately conscious of the fact that there was a draught below the doorway, that there was an aching glare from the fire-place, that the lamps smelled, and that conversation was exhausting.

The first evening of their arrival Lady Dutton had thrown an unusual amount of sickly complaints at her son. She wanted him to feel how much she had sacrificed in coming to Boulderstone from the shores of the Mediterranean. And, indeed, she told him that were it not for the marriage which was to crown the banishment before the year had ended, she could never have prevailed on herself to leave the South. Sir Neil was to be married some time in the autumn—the exact date of the ceremony had not yet been fixed. It was understood to be in the month of September. But in the meantime Mr. Frazer, having during the winter deputed a man to look into the condition of the Boulderstone estates, had determined to take up his residence at the Castle until his schemes for making them “pay” had been put into operation.

It was to be a working year, therefore; and just at the outset of it Sir Neil found himself with a day or two still on his hands before the Frazers arrived in the house of his forefathers.

He was not the same radiant being we have seen on the deck of the yacht, or leading his future bride up steep ascents on the shores of a southern sea. His trip to America seemed to have aged him considerably, though there had been scarcely six months of it. There was, indeed, the same frankness in his demeanor, and it attracted to his service a large stag-hound, who, as he opened the wicket leading to the garden, pushed himself through behind the baronet. Sir Neil sauntered down the sea-wall of the garden, under an avenue of limes; the flower-beds sent up a fragrance of fresh earth; as yet

there was nothing in flower but the crocuses and snow-drops, for in that respect Boulderstone was not an early place.

Presently he paused beneath a tree; there was a heap of chips fresh cut on the pathway.

"Why should they cut the trees?" said Sir Neil, addressing his dog, who was contemptuously smelling a field-mouse apparently too feeble to get out of his way. The question had hardly been asked when the answer came in the swift descent of a boy from among the branches. The boy had neither coat nor waistcoat on his back; and as he fell a great gully knife rolled on the walk at the baronet's feet.

The startled hound turned tail and fled back to the wicket; Sir Neil looked down at the apparition in amazement, and the apparition sat with a rueful face rubbing its haunches.

"My boy, I expect you have very seriously hurt yourself," said the baronet, surveying the rueful face kindly. "It seems to me you have had a very narrow escape; you might have stabbed yourself with this great instrument," alluding to the knife.

The boy, with his hand on his haunches, rose cautiously, and began to "hirple" away.

"Wait a minute, you mustn't go like that. Here's this great knife you've got to take away with you."

Whereupon the boy returned cautiously and picked up the gully, and again turned to go.

"Here, my boy, I want to speak to you. Did you drop from the clouds just now, or how did it come about?"

"No, sir, I cam' oot o' the tree."

"And do you spend much of your time in these trees?"

"No, sir, I never was in ane afore. Sure's death, sir, it's the first time I was ever in a tree afore."

"Well, there isn't anything much surer than death, is there? But did nobody ever tell you that these trees belong to me?"

"They're Sir Neil's trees, an' he's awa' frae hame."

"So you thought you might go up and peel a branch as long as he was away. He's back now, and I can tell you, my boy, he doesn't like the branches of his trees lopped off."

The boy said nothing. But the voice which addressed him was so kind that, notwithstanding the occupation he had been engaged in, he moved but slowly away.

"Off again! Just wait a minute; I'm sure you're not in any great hurry."

The boy looked round and said, "I'm gaitherin' bait, sir. I've nae bizniz to be here."

"You've no business to be here because you're getting bait? Don't you think you've no business to be up these trees cutting them with that knife, because the trees belonged to some other body?"

The boy did not follow the argument, so silence again ensued. It flashed upon Sir Neil that the poor boy might perhaps have coveted the branches for firewood.

"What did you want the wood for?" he asked, half anticipating a tale of pathos.

"For 'knotty,'" said the boy.

"And who's Knotty?"

"A gemm they play whan the tide's oot."

"Oh, a game. I know. And do all the Boulderstone boys get their clubs from my trees?"

"They're no' your trees. They're Sir Neil's."

"Yes, but I'm Sir Neil."

The boy looked at the baronet for a moment, and turning, fled precipitately along the edge of the sea-wall.

"Well," exclaimed Sir Neil to himself, "that looks like popularity in one's own town."

But he was not yet done with the boy. As he advanced down the walk he saw a back trying to make itself invisible behind a glass forcing-case. Coming up the walk he noticed one of his gardeners, whose appearance had evidently also stopped the boy's progress.

"I say, Grey, how is it that a boy can come in with a sheath-knife and cut the trees?"

Grey touched his hat and opened his mouth, and Sir Neil watched the boy's back going nearer and nearer the ground on the other side of the case.

Grey had never heard of such an outrage before.

"I fancy the first boy we catch we shall have to hang."

Grey did not know whether that would be allowable; but he could answer for it, a boy "catched" in the act could be "jiled" for three months.

"That'll do, Grey," said Sir Neil, in a low voice; and when the gardener, a little terrified by the awful views of punishment just aired by his master, had retired out of sight, Sir Neil raised his voice solemnly.

"A boy who could cut off a branch of a tree, Grey, willfully, with a pocket-knife, Grey, for the purpose of playing 'knotty,' ought to be dealt with in a manner proportioned to his offense. Grey, such a boy you may observe at this moment"—the body of the boy on the other side of the case disappeared entirely from view—"he is concealing himself. Go, Grey, take him by the breeches and hand him over to the policeman, and present Sir Neil Dutton's compliments and say that he is to keep him—"

"Oh, michty!" was the sound that came from behind the case, and the guilty youth raised a dolorous head, as if he were prepared for any fate.

But looking over to Sir Neil, he saw no gardener, and the person who had apostrophized him was smiling serenely.

The boy, much relieved, sat down on the edge of his hiding-place.

"If ye lat me aff this time, sir, I'll never do't again. I kent fine it was wrang. Miss Bertha told me afore that I wad get into mischief if—"

"Who's Miss Bertha?"

"Her that's teachin' me to be a sailor, sir."

"What! a woman teach you to be a sailor? How's that? Come along and tell me all about it. I'm going out on the shore. Since you're going to sea, I must expect you to make a rigging among my trees."

"Thank ye, sir," said the boy, as Sir Neil, opening a lock-fast door in the sea-wall, stepped down upon the beach.

The tide was out, and among the bladder-wrack on the low-lying rocks a number of figures were stooping, cutting limpets and putting them into pails.

Sir Neil paused as the full sweep of the Atlantic met his eyes, and the culprit began to shuffle away.

"But, boy, who is Miss Bertha?"

"The schule-mistress. She kens everything. Are ye no' comin' tae the lanch, sir?"

"She knows everything, and am I not to be at the launch?"

"We've gotten six new boats, sir, and Miss Bertha's goin' to christen them before the fishin' begins."

"She knows everything, and she's going to christen the boats? Is she a very old woman, Miss Bertha?"

"Oh, mighty, no, sir; she's younger nor mony o' the wives in Boulderstone."

"That may be, my boy; but many of them must be as old as the century, if you understand that."

"Yes, sir," said the boy, not in the least understanding. "I wad like to gaither ma bait noo, sir," he added, hurriedly; "the tide's comin' in."

And the pair parted.

Sir Neil strolled among the shingle enjoying the cool sea-breeze.

He had had a good deal of the sea lately; all the breadth of the Atlantic of it. But how was it, as he looked out on the white waves beyond the rocks, that he felt he needed it more and more?

The truth was, he was not at all easy about his future. Boulderstone was to be rescued from poverty; he was to start life and take a share, if possible, in making the history of his period. But before that, there was marriage and many things to intervene. The prospect of rescuing Boulderstone was pleasant to him. He looked up its gnarled walls, and remembered how many generations of Duttons had heard the roar of the winds and the sea from within, and he felt small and humble to think that in his hands the old place should be allowed to tumble to pieces.

Yes, it was good to rescue Boulderstone, he told himself. But the marriage—and the share he was going to take in public life?

Going to America had rather disenchanted Sir Neil. During his travels he had received at regular intervals little pink notes from Caroline. They were written in a clear, angular hand, and they were well interlined. Her letters were not, however, what he had expected. Much as he loved the girl, the longer he stayed in America the sillier they seemed to grow. He had read children's letters over and over again that for sense and affection put Caroline's epistles out of court. His mind was then in a chaos from which only the natural geniality of his temperament could extricate him. He dreaded that when Caroline came back to him he would not feel toward her as he had felt on the Mediterranean.

Then there was a whole world of local trouble preparing. He felt sure of that, because the man Mr. Frazer had appointed had superseded, to a certain extent, his own factor, who, on the first night of his arrival, had poured out to him a succession of personal grievances, some of which he would require to redress. It seemed likely in that way that Mr. Frazer, who undertook the restoration

of the property on the understanding that he must be allowed to arrange everything in his own way, might resent any dictation. But at the outset the sweep of the sea-air, the little river silently joining the bay, the voices of the children among the rocks, and the feeling of spring, did much to clear away the gloom of the baronet's reflections.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BATTERY.

BOULDERSTONE was generally some time behind the great movements of the world. Fashion had broken up the bonnets, tightened the skirts, changed the "do" of the hair and the character of the walk at least twice elsewhere before Boulderstone society had adjusted its conceptions to the altered condition of things. Thus, for example, long after the rest of the female world had shrunk into a tenth of the size they once assumed under the *régime* of crinoline, the Boulderstone ladies were still laboriously moving into their pews on Sundays the centers of circumferences of clothing at once vast and bewildering. So, too, with the rest of their personal adornments, if they had gone into a fashion in which an abundance of floral decoration was exacted, they remained in it, under the pleasing impression that they were walking the earth like princesses and other abstractions of dress in the far South.

It was much the same with the politics of Boulderstone.

Rejoicing in its little nook of the British empire, where the papers were necessarily a day old before they brought information of what the rest of the world was engaged in, its emotions were a little slow to rise. There was nothing to immediately connect them with, as in towns where the telegraph wires brought the roar of the world back in a whisper. If individuals felt strongly on any current subject of interest, they could only become spokesmen for their emotions to the first argumentative neighbor they met, and as political parties were very equally divided, it was not always a soothing process.

A good-humored query of Mr. Angus, the draper, addressed to Mr. Bain, the ironmonger, in which the former asked if his neighbor knew what "that Disraeli was about noo," being met by the assertion that "He nicht speer at Gledstane," had a tendency to develop itself into sinister allusions to the relative respectability of each other's standing in Boulderstone. Some prudent people restricted their interests as much as possible to things having a definite bearing upon the immediate future of the town itself. Nor was there the slightest feeling in any quarter of being behind the age, though Mr. Gerrie, the watch-maker, who read a monthly magazine, and had several volumes under lock and key—understood to be contradictions of the truth as it is in Genesis—sometimes hinted at a general tendency to slowness. Only he had nothing to grumble at, as Mr. Staples, the baker, said, for he made his bread out of the tendency, his bill for the loss of time on the town clock being a good proof of that.

A boy with a head of bronzed curly hair, without coat or waist-

coat, walking down the High Street was the means, however, of putting Boulderstone in train with a movement which the casual arrival of newspapers failed in doing.

It was boy "Heatherhead," the son of a fisherman who lived near the east toll bar. Heatherhead—as he was called to his face by his equals, and at his back by all the smaller boys who knew his prowess—was doing nothing in particular at the moment he originated the movement. He had discharged a fragment of whinstone at a family of sparrows which were banqueting in the middle of the road when he was opposite the doctor's; he had pulled the bell of the parish school-master's house and withdrawing himself within shade of a doorway a little further down, had heard Kate, the servant, make an unmistakable reference to "the devil" before she shut the door again. He had surreptitiously opened the "back door" of the municipal cart, and seen, with glee, the load of sand trickling down the street. He had just chased a retriever, roared a nickname at a lawyer's clerk, climbed the banker's wall to see who was beating carpets on the other side, and was sedately making his way down the High Street without any visible means of interesting himself.

Suddenly opening his mouth, however, Heatherhead, in a clear, strong voice, broke out with,

"We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too."

The more to amuse himself, boy Heatherhead turned the sound on with increased vehemence at each shop door on his way down; and singing all the length to the ships at the river-side, he left a sense of melody in the heads of more than one person standing behind the counters.

Indeed Mr. Leith, who was making out some accounts in a small room off his affluent grocery store, was compelled to lay down his pen with some irritation; and shortly afterward, going upstairs to a midday meal, he astonished his wife by taking his fiddle out of its case, and performing a variation which she then heard for the first time in her life. Over and over again the worthy grocer played the tune, and to the last fit of scraping he added the warlike words,

"We don't want to fight," etc.

"Preserve me, James, where did ye get that rant from?" asked Mrs. Leith; but James only chuckled, for the tune seemed to put his politics in line of march, and he determined to lay hold of boy Heatherhead and have the air intact.

He did not require to wait for the air long. Having stepped an hour later into the stationer's shop, there were the very words staring him in the face on a new piece of music.

"I'll tak' this with me, Mr. Allen," said he; and in a few minutes more the fiddle was engaged in a furious outburst of martial music.

Mr. Smith, the banker's clerk, was also blowing the thing out of his flute a day or two afterward; and the band having paraded the town to its measure, the melody made itself audible in various depressing tinkles of the piano in different corners of Boulderstone.

The origin of the tune, so far as the town is concerned, has already been lost in obscurity. Heatherhead certainly introduced it; but how he, a boy of roving and irresponsible habits, should have obtained it at all must ever remain a sort of mystery.

It might have reached him through some proximity to the commercial travelers who stayed at the hotel, or from some of the stokers on board the Sandstone steamboat, with whom he used freely to consort.

It was at the height of this musical fervor at Boulderstone that Banker Manson was taking his constitutional on the Brown Hill.

The hill was no more than a slope, and it was not the least brown; but at any rate Banker Manson was walking there when Bailie Coghill, the ship-owner, approached from another quarter, and the pair of municipal rulers exchanging salutations, stood looking down at the chimneys of their native town, and at the ocean that lay outside it.

"There can be nae doot, Bailie Coghill, that that man Disraeli is goin' to snap his thoom in the face of the Zaar of Roosia, and everything goes to prove to my mind that before many weeks are oot we will be plunged into a bloody war."

"Deed, banker, I'm thinkin' ye're no far wrang; and though, as ye know, I'm a Liberal myself, I canna but think that if he snap-pit baith thooms et the Zaar's nose, he would be actin' like a patriot."

"All very good," replied the banker, his eye seeking the horizon; "but Captain Jansen was in my office the other day, and he told me that he made out a Roosian cruiser in the offing."

"Whaur's that?"

"Toots, man, in the distance. He made oot a Roosian cruiser, and what's to hinder that cruiser from laying this town in ashes? It would be a ploy to them. An' we havena a rifle or a cannon amangst us to say them nay."

"Ay," replied the bailie, "but that would be a fine-like thing. He's a perfect humbug that Disraeli. What the deevil has he to do wi' the Zaar?"

The banker was not displeased with the impression he had made.

"What you and I have to do wi', bailie, is nether the Zaar nor the Premier. If they fecht we maun fecht, an' I dinna like they Roosians—there's ower mony o' them—but we must have something to fecht wi'. We must have 'men an' money too,' as they're a singin' an' thrummin' down there just now. We must have a battery, an artillery corps, a rifle corps, and an armory. We must have officers and non-commissioned officers, and big-gun practice, and target shooting; and the sooner the better, when they cruisers are nosing about the offing."

Bailie Coghill left his friend soon after, and next day Boulderstone was in a panic.

Every peaceful coaster that showed a top-sail at the foot of the headlands was thought to be "the Roosian cruiser." A crowd mobbed the mail-coach in the evening for the newspapers, to know if war was yet declared, and altogether, in the light of being reduced to ashes, imperial politics became a burning question for all intelligent individuals.

The consequence was that Boulderstone rose *en masse*, and agitated. The war authorities were communicated with. Banker Manson disappeared to the South for a fortnight; and when he returned it was currently reported that he had "seen the Premier, and he wasna a bad fellow."

Whether that may have occurred is more doubtful than the rumor; but at any rate so expeditiously had the banker gone about his negotiations that two evil-looking machines of destruction were shortly landed at Sandstone harbor, and being conveyed to the cliffs to the west of the town, were surrounded with heaps of "divot," which Drummer Budge called a battery. And under Drummer Budge's tuition an artillery corps had been enrolled, the banker, albeit he was bald and round, and fat, being appointed something officially very high in command, the lord of the manor alone being superior officer to him.

The bailie and the banker again met on their favorite walk.

"Weel, bailie, this is fine spring weather. Hae ye seen the baronet?"

"Fine weather, Mr. Manson. I have not."

"I've had one interview with him," rejoined the banker, "in anticipation of the toon rejoicings at his arrival among us. I can not altogether mak' the young man out. He will have no rejoicings, he says, for him. 'But,' says I, 'Sir Neil Dutton, it's on the toon books that there have been rejoicings o' some sort for every Dutton that has come into the estates.' Says he, 'Mr. Manson, I can not afford it—at least for some time to come.' 'They tell me you are goin' to be married, sir,' says I. 'Well,' says he, not altogether pleased-looking at the insinuation, which I put in a jocular manner, 'we must all come to that, I suppose.' Says I, 'Sir Neil, when there are estates to keep in a family, marriage is, perhaps, necessary; but for my part I will have no women to rule over my house.' He laughed at that. 'But,' says he, 'why should you rejoice because a man has come to spend a month or two in his own home? You don't get up and hurrah a new harbor-master, or a fiesh parson out of the South. Why should you get the people together to cheer me? I've never done anything for the town. It owes me nothing. It is likely to owe me less.' 'Hoots, toots, Sir Neil,' I ventured to say to him, for the young man has a reproachful manner with him that invites sympathy from a man of my standing—'hoots, toots,' says I. 'Boulderstone toon has owed Boulderstone Castle everything since the fifteenth century. I have the honor of being provost of Boulderstone, and it's my duty to represent to you that the feeling is as strong to-day as ever it was, and I hope you will put nothing in the way to hinder the people from expressing their satisfaction at your arrival in their midst. Be it but a cake and wine,' says I, 'in the Toon Hall so munificently presented to us by your worthy father—be it but a cake and wine, we will expect you to receive our congratulations.' 'Surely, surely, provost,' says he, quite freely—and he has a pleasant manner when he is not looking worried—'I will, if it will give you any pleasure; but anything like a formal rejoicing I must absolutely forbid. I have not allowed the tenantry even to light the bonfires, nor given them the dance they no doubt expected.' 'Hoots, toots,' I again ventured to say to him, bailie—for

there was a sorrowfu' expression in the young man's eye—I'm fear'd we're too far oot o' the world for you.' But he resented that, and returning on the rejoicings, said bitterly, as you might have observed yoursel' had you been there, ' You shouldn't rejoice till you are sure of your man, provost; I can't say yet whether I'm going to bring you good luck or not.' He raither feared me with his abruptness, and says I, " Sir Neil, with God's help you will never bring an honorable name into association with misfortune.' Then he raither smiled again, and says he, finishing the interview with a masterful wave of the hand—his grandfather's wave of the hand—' No, you sha'n't have misfortune if I can help it; but yet hold over the rejoicings for a little till we see.' And I left him, bailie, doubtful whether the new laird is not a little incomprehensible."

" I wad agree with you," said the bailie, ruminating.—" Did he no speak aboot the guns?"

" Man, it's wonderful how the subject that's uppermost in a man's mind sometimes goes doonmost. To be sure, he spoke about the guns; an' he consented, in his regimental capacity, to be there at the openin', and to bring her leddyship with him."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ARRIVAL.

MR. FRAZER and Caroline were expected at the castle on Wednesday. They arrived a day earlier. To reach Boulderstone it was necessary to drive half through the country, for the town was still outside the circuit of the railway. The reason of that was not a want of material for traffic; the cod, ling, herring, turbot, and flounders of the bay, the abundant trout, and salmon of the river, alone made a traffic worth calculating in the board-room of a judicious railway management. Ten miles to the south, however, there was a gap in the shore-line hundreds of feet deep, into which the sea discharged itself with uncontrollable fury. Engineer after engineer had peeped over the edge of the gap, and clouds of briny vapor ascending to their faces, they stepped back saying that no bridge could span the chasm. The last of the stage-coaches still ran, therefore, into Boulderstone each day, and the horn of the guard wakened the echoes all along the river-side and through the town, as the coach rolled grandly into the court of Swanson's inn.

But Mr. Frazer and his daughter, coming on the scene a day earlier than they had announced, preferred a conveyance of their own. The innkeeper at Humster, knowing their destination, got a loan of the parish minister's mare for the occasion; and, giving her as a yoke-fellow a stout little horse of his own, the speculator and his daughter bowled through the flat, treeless country at a great rate.

Their servants came behind them at as rapid a pace as a horse with shaggy legs and a 'chapel-cart could convey them.

Mr. Frazer was in no way changed by the winter that had gone over his head. If anything, he seemed more youthful than he had been before.

He was quietly dressed, and more in the style of eight-and-twenty

than five-and-fifty, with his turn-over collar, his sailor-knot of corded silk, his rings, and his brick-red whiskers in the form of well-trimmed chops.

His manner of surveying things was not much changed. He had a way of looking out of the carriage that was not so much looking as peering furtively. What he really saw he saw with the tail of his eye, the straightforward range of his vision being a superfluity to him for all practical purposes.

Caroline sat with a supremely bored expression on her face. Sometimes she strained her head at the side of the carriage as if she expected to see a horseman ride up to accost them, but only to bring a new look of discontent on her frankly sensual countenance.

"Mercy me!" grumbled the girl, as the carriage rolled up a slope to the brow of a hill commanding the sea, "I believe that's Boulderstone. What a black-looking place the castle is! I'm sure I'll die in this cold climate."

"Now, Carry, I've told you more than once," said her father, sharply, "that you must be more cheery. Do you know what it means? That's the castle you are to be mistress of. Bless me! it's no' so very long since we were residin' in a three-room flat in the East End o' Glasgow."

"I'm sure I wish you would drop that, papa. I remember nothing about the flat in the East End, and what's the use of recalling it, when you have more money than you know what to do with?"

"Ah, well, Carry, you may as well remember there's something to be thankful for, instead of going into the Dutton family as discontented as you can look. The young man'll expect you to be a trifle happy after so long a separation."

"Oh, it's quite a town," said Caroline, changing the conversation; "there's a steeple with a bell and a clock, and the houses are quite grand at the river-side; and the castle's warmer looking as you get nearer it."

But being driven through the park to the hall door, a slight sense of coldness returned.

They had not been expected, and the dignified, if dilapidated, butler looked at them with a forbidding, not to say supercilious air, as he examined them for the first time.

Then Sir Neil had ridden into the country, and there was no telling when he might be back. Lady Dutton made up a little for it by a stately embrace of Caroline and a kiss on each cold cheek. And the 'chapel-cart having deposited a man and maid, with as much material as could make father and daughter presentable—their heavy luggage being left for the carrier to bring next day—they were ushered into the rooms which had been prepared for them.

"Jane," said Caroline to her maid in the dainty boudoir off the bedroom that overlooked the garden and the sea-wall, "I hope you have something in the flask, for Lady Dutton hasn't offered me anything. I'm perishing with cold."

"Yes, miss," answered Jane, bringing out from the depths of a travelling-bag an ingenious bottle. "But it'll have a strong smell, miss, and that doesn't look nice in the middle of the day."

"Just a little though," pleaded Caroline, wearily, as she brought her face into close proximity with the mirror.

And the maid poured a little brandy into a glass before she began to tighten the little figure into its plumpest proportions. After advancing, retiring, trimming, and adjusting her, Caroline looked as full of life and gayety as ever. She need have no anxiety, one might have thought, in meeting the lord of the manor in the evening.

She had time to rest for some hours before Sir Neil had ridden back to the castle. It was six months since she had waved her handkerchief at him in the roadstead of Greenock. As the moment approached for seeing him face to face, she became seriously alive to her dress and appearance.

"Jane, I'm fit to break," she exclaimed, at one moment, wriggling inside her tight skirts, but looking pretty enough in her distress.

"Jane, you wouldn't know it on me that I had taken anything?" she asked, approaching her red lips to the face of her maid, who cheered her by a prompt negative.

"Indeed, miss, you look beautiful, and the baronet will be ill to please if he doesn't think it too."

A knock at the door, and a servant to say that Sir Neil Dutton was in the drawing-room, sent Caroline to take a last glance in the mirror, a hasty final adjustment by the maid, and then she was ready to come forth.

Sir Neil was standing as she entered, in evening dress, outside the light of the lamps, partly in the shadow of the high-carved mantelpiece.

Caroline paused as the door was closed behind her, and Sir Neil, clearing a space among the couches and chairs that were gathered round the fireplace, was presently at her side. He had sprung rapidly to meet her; he led her into the light in silence, quietly, gravely, and as he stooped to kiss her, it was with the slightest touch of his lips.

"Oh, Neil, you've been a long time away," said the girl, turning her brown eyes to his face.

"A long time," echoed Sir Neil, with both her hands in his left hand, and his right hand on her shoulder. A long time indeed, he felt, as he looked at her—this girl, who was to be his wife, and who was to take the difficult journey with him through the world. And the longer he looked, the more he felt that the width of the Atlantic was still between her and him. Neither of them spoke for a little, and Caroline, in a querulous, commonplace voice, asked did he "mind Sardinia?"

There was an implied rebuke in it. At Sardinia it was all cooing tenderness between them.

"I've been on the Atlantic since then," he replied, leading her to a seat; and for half an hour their conversation was chiefly pauses.

The arrival of Mr. Frazer and Lady Dutton, and the announcement of dinner, interrupted them, when they had begun to talk as if they were acquaintances who had met for the first time, and who felt that there was little prospect of the acquaintanceship ripening into anything else.

At dinner Sir Neil was, from time to time, terribly conscious that

in coming north to set matters right in the factor's office at Boulderstone, Mr. Frazer had introduced Caroline as a good business expedient.

Caroline, on the other hand, was piqued to find an alteration in her lover's behavior, and she attributed it—in so far as she explained it to herself—to the aristocratic surroundings.

On board the yacht she had been a soft, yielding, dove-like girl of nineteen. Dinner was not half done at Boulderstone before she had broadly hinted in half a dozen ways that it was in her father's power to buy most people up, and the consciousness of the fact maintained her without embarrassment amid some pauses of growing awkwardness.

"It's the first salmon I've tasted this year, Lady Dutton," and she looked at the magnificent personage at the foot of the table.

"They are the first that have been caught, but not by me," said Sir Neil. "My river is really among the earliest in Scotland."

Mr. Frazer's side-glance surveyed the baronet as he talked of "my river."

"They have begun with the stake nets, I suppose, at the bar," he rejoined, conscious in some way that Caroline and the baronet were not understanding each other as they used to do. But he was not put out, having a secure faith in the power of circumstances to place matters on a sound business footing.

"Yes, but they have not begun to catch yet."

"That'll not pay," remarked Caroline, with an intonation that sounded curiously objectionable to the Duttons.

Lady Dutton, in particular, took alarm; she never had the slightest idea herself when a certain condition of things was likely to pay or lose in this world. She had taken measurement of Caroline's powers, and it had been her opinion that she was profoundly neutral in her tastes, and as impracticable as her son's future wife should be. She scented danger, therefore, in the very turn of the remark.

"I would think, Caroline," said her father, abruptly, "you would leave the like of that to me. She knows nothing about it, ma'am," he explained to the alarmed Lady Dutton.

"Dear me, I'm sure the mutton is just like venison," pursued the pragmatical Caroline later on. "How does it get that nice taste?"

"Our good heather partly, and partly your very healthy appetite," answered Sir Neil, whose sense of hospitality was gratified by the glow of delight on the girl's face as she fed herself.

"Do you know," she ejaculated, as she leaned back after securing the breast of a fowl, "this is the queerest country I was ever in; there wasn't a crow on the road or on the fields all the way along."

"It's the want of timber," said Mr. Frazer, a little proud of his daughter's superior observation. "I think we might do something to rectify that," he added, in the voice he used in the board-rooms of various companies.

"The surface of the country is so exposed to the wind that I should have little hope of wood growing. There's some tradition of my grandfather having planted extensively without much surviving beyond a few mountain ashes. Besides, the Boulderstone

folks seem to have a private enmity to trees. I caught a boy among the limes at the sea-wall hacking a branch away. He said that he wanted it for 'knotty,' and he wouldn't do it again, and that an old woman was teaching him to be a sailor. We became great friends over the transaction."

Mr. Frazer's sense of justice was shocked, and it came natural to him to say, "He deserved imprisonment, the young blackguard. I hope you have his name, Sir Neil?"

"Oh yes, he let me have his name. Heatherhead, I believe he called himself."

"How could an old woman teach him to be a sailor?"

"Many of the women here are amphibious. I don't quite know how this particular old woman teaches Heatherhead, but he seemed to talk with a perfect good faith. I suspect she is a character. She is the presiding deity at some launch that is to come off one of these days. I dare say we shall hear more of her."

CHAPTER XIX.

AT THE FERRY.

BETWEEN the bridge and the river-mouth there was a ferry-boat which plied for hire. A gate from the Boulderstone Gardens led to the road, and from the road to the river-bank where the old ferryman received his fares. He and his boat were on the town side of the river as Bertha came along the road, on a fresh spring evening, and stood by the little wharf of Norwegian pine.

Bertha had been walking on the east cliffs beyond the castle that evening, and in her hand was a trophy of the walk in the shape of a bunch of primroses and violets, gathered among the grassy slopes and dimples in which the east cliff culminated.

She was standing at the wharf looking down the river and toward the sea, and it was in that attitude Sir Neil Dutton first saw her, as he suddenly emerged from the gardens by the little gate on the same spring evening.

The sight of her arrested his steps, and he paused for a moment. The tall, finely-formed figure, clad in dark serge, the bright, earnest face looking wistfully toward the sea, and the rays of the sun glancing among her hair—he could not choose but pause.

She was waiting for the ferry-man; that he saw at a glance. But who was she? What could be more unexpected than to come upon this stately, beautiful figure on the outer side of his garden wall?

"There is no boatman," he said, quietly, behind her, as if he had known her for a life-time.

But his voice was lower than he intended; it hardly reached her, or she did not hear it. She seemed wholly unconscious of anything except the gleams of sunlight on the river, the chafing of the waves beyond the bar, the plains of dark sea further out, and the horizon of clouds piling themselves up in masses tinted with the pink and saffron of the setting sun.

"The boatman has forsaken his post," repeated Sir Neil in a louder tone; and turning from the sea she met his kind glance.

Bertha did not start, nor show confusion nor surprise; she received her outward impressions with perfect calmness.

"I begin to fear the old man will not come back again. Besides, as he has double duty to perform, he may be in the parish church-yard."

"Or the Whale's Head. I am told he is often inside that monster; a kind of Jonah, without any desire for deliverance."

Bertha smiled, and Sir Neil said, "I am going over too, and I wish he could be got hold of. I wonder if 'Boat ahoy' would bring him." And the young man, putting his hand to his mouth, spoke across the river, which the inflowing tide had widened out of its usual proportions. "Boat ahoy, there!"

"The old man is very jealous of his boat," said Bertha. "He padlocks and removes the oars when he is not in it. I fear there is no chance of his coming again to-night. He may really be in the grave-yard, for a little boy is to be buried to-morrow."

"Ah! It is enough to make one think the Boulder is the Styx and the ferry-man old Charon. And my kennel is near enough, and the noise of the dogs loud enough, to give one the impression that Cerberus may be somewhere about."

Sir Neil did not add that the vision of Bertha suggested to him a figure from the Greek cosmology.

Bertha knew now that it was the lord of the manor who spoke to her, and said respectfully, but with no alteration in her voice, "You are Sir Neil Dutton."

Her quiet serenity had a queenliness in it that shook the baronet's familiarity of tone.

He faltered slightly as he raised his hat, murmuring, "May I ask—"

"Bertha St. Clair."

"What! the old woman dressed in tarpaulin, with a voice like a saw, who teaches the young thieves of Boulderstone to be sailors? But, I beg your pardon," he went on, as Bertha looked puzzled; "I have heard of you, and for some reason or other you were associated in my mind with a masculine form of the sort I have rather rudely described."

They had begun to move along the road, and Sir Neil asked her if she were not afraid of being on a solitary highway frequented by a good many tinkers.

"I've just come from one of their caves—the cave in the cliff beyond your castle. The little boy who is to be buried to-morrow lies in his coffin among a crowd of tinkers."

"And you mean to tell me that you have been in the heart of that drunken, violent set of scoundrels, alone and without protection? Why, they are the terror of the castle. You surprise me. Your courage—"

"It requires no courage; I have nothing to fear from them. I have gone among them for years and received nothing but kindness."

"Nothing but kindness! Why, we were just putting ourselves in correspondence with the police authorities so as to clear the shore of them. One of these days they must be swept out."

"Swept out!" and Bertha's voice slightly trembled.

"Why, yes; don't you know there is a very experienced politician living at the castle just now—Mr. Frazer, you may have heard of him. He is a genuine, thorough-going politician, and he suggests a halter apiece for them."

"How brutal!"

"Well, then, what would you suggest? You have been going among them a great deal. You know them, I dare say, better than most people. What would you suggest?"

"Most of them are clever workmen. I have basket chairs in my sitting-room made by a tinker; many of my kitchen things are made by them. Some of their boys can make artificial flies—"

"And can catch salmon, I dare say."

"Yes, and can catch salmon. Why should you drive them out of their caves? By degrees they were coming into the town and doing honest work. If you drive them out those tinkers who settled to work in the town will join them, and all the good they have learned will be undone."

Sir Neil slackened his pace as they stepped from the road to a meadow which skirted the river. It was a low-lying meadow, its grass nipped close by the sheep, and as it was overrun by every high tide, its surface was honey-combed with chasms in which the brackish water remained some feet deep. He paused before the first chasm, and would have gone round; but, with her flowers in one hand and dress deftly gathered in the other, Bertha sprung lightly across. He followed with surprise. Another and yet another pool of water intervened, and still Bertha led.

Sir Neil had not had such jumping for years, and, though he was something of an athlete, he was sufficiently out of practice to be a little out of breath by the time the meadow was half crossed. It was twilight now; a star here and there was piercing the heavens; their reflections were in all the pools. There was nothing for it but to follow the girl's lead, if he wished to get over dry-shod.

By the time they had come to the end of the field he had almost forgotten about the tinkers, and was constructing a compliment to her athleticism which she might take without offense; but they had no sooner settled down again to their walking pace than Bertha began:

"There are several tinker families I have been able to get into town who are just like their neighbors now—as regular and respectable as possible. And I expect some more to come in shortly. There was a missionary among them for some time—a good man, who preached to them. But the tinker boys pelted him with clods, and the women swore at him, and he had to go away to avoid being shocked. He has since written a very useless book about them. They are not so bad as they are called; and if they are bad, they are capable of improving by being brought into town."

"I assure you, Miss St. Clair, your views are most valuable. We are just considering these questions now at the castle a good deal. Only we rather incline—at least, Mr. Frazer does—to think that it would be better for the town if there were fewer inhabitants in it than there are. There would be better living, don't you see, for each if there were fewer to compete with. We are in negotiation for a block of houses at this very moment with one Captain Jan-

sen. The gentleman who is managing these things for me proposes to take them down, as a first step toward relieving Boulderstone of the surplus population which is troubling it."

"And what," exclaimed Bertha, stopping short and facing Sir Neil in the starlight, "do you suppose the people will do when their homes are taken down?"

"Oh, these things adjust themselves by an economical law. If the people don't find homes here they will go where they can find both homes and employment. There is a law of that sort, just like gravitation, you know, Miss St. Clair."

"A law, yes—there is a law; when the people are turned out of their homes they will for a little time starve with their friends, and then they will join the tinkers. Some of them will die; the old, the sick, and the very young will die. That law of nature's framing is sure enough of being fulfilled."

Sir Neil felt profoundly uncomfortable at that moment. He would have liked to have been overpowering and dogmatic, but what could he do with a young lady who pelted his "laws" with facts?

"But," said Bertha, as she resumed her way, "they will not be allowed to die or to go to the caves. Captain Jansen will put the case before me"—she spoke as if she were a judge—"and I will decide that the houses are not to be sold."

"Then you are my enemy," said the baronet, gayly; "and I shall not be able to carry out my schemes of reform in the community if you array yourself against me."

"Heaven forbid! you will think me very forward and interfering. I have been hasty in speaking as I have done. But there is so much to do in Boulderstone to make its people happy, and there are so many wrong ways of doing it. Oh, sir, I would rather ask to be allowed to help your good work of reform than to hinder it."

They were standing on the bridge now, looking over the lighted town. For a few moments he leaned his elbows on the parapet, and saw the stars shining in reflection from the river.

"I shall have to come to you for ideas," he said. "You have been here for years. You naturally know more of the wants of Boulderstone than any other person."

"If I could be of any help," said Bertha; and they shook hands in the twilight.

CHAPTER XX.

MEETING THE TOWN.

MR. FRAZER had warned Sir Neil that it would be better not to accept public rejoicings, and the advice coincided with the baronet's own feelings on the subject. Nevertheless, he had consented to open the battery; so that Mr. Frazer had no excuse to urge when he was asked to join the party. He had not been across the river or down the town yet, it was true; but the sooner he saw Boulderstone *en masse* the better it would be. And the opening of the battery was a red-letter day.

There was a general running to do honor to the two ponderous

instruments of destruction that had been dragged to the west cliff. In every house there was a certain amount of martial feeling predominant. The corps which had been embodied by Banker Manson and drilled into marching efficiency by Drummer Budge, consisted of laborers from the quarries, shop assistants from the High Street, a sprinkling of fishermen, and a few hinds from the neighboring farm bothies. Their drill had been conducted in private within the Town Hall, so that the day on which they were to exhibit themselves as a grand defensive apparatus was looked forward to with no little interest by the entire populace.

Early in the morning, therefore, and while the members of the artillery corps were as yet pouring oil into the hollow of their hands, and carefully flattening their hair in front of slabs of looking-glass, the shrill sound of half a score of flutes was asserting itself all over Boulderstone. It was Mr. Smith's band reminding the town that it "didn't want to fight," etc. So that by half-past ten o'clock, when Sir Neil Dutton handed his mother and Miss Frazer out of their carriage at the front door of Swanson's inn, and Mr. Frazer followed them into the general room, commanding a view of a surging crowd beneath, the air was rent with shouts.

Into this room, from the windows of which the crowd spied, with increasing manifestations of delight, the spacious person of Lady Dutton and the light little figure of Miss Frazer, were brought one by one the more important citizens of Boulderstone.

These included the procurator-fiscal, who, as factor to some land-owning families beyond the bounds of the Boulderstone property, had acquired considerable means.

He had been enrolled as an officer of artillery under Banker Manson, who, in full uniform, now introduced him to the ladies. The banker himself, with his rotund figure and his bad pate, looked rather unlike a man of martial disposition and office; and as he stepped forward to the window, puffing nervously and endeavoring to square his shoulders to the correct fighting attitude, he seemed like a red and white gnome.

Lady Dutton, however, was encouraging, notwithstanding the keenness of her hawk's eye; and the banker having marched himself into a respectful proximity to her ladyship, the introductions came off quite successfully.

The procurator-fiscal retired precipitately, his sword between his legs, to make room for minor officers like Lieutenants Reid and Kidd, who, the former blushing down to the top of his stock, the latter pale with agitation, ambled into position, bowed, remained silent when addressed, and, on retiring, abruptly bowed each other against the door-posts.

"They are new to it, your ladyship," said Mr. Petersen, the tall, kindly-looking parish minister, who, though he had been appointed chaplain, contented himself with great wisps of linen at his throat and breast, as full uniform for him.

"And I hope," he added, parenthetically, in virtue of his peaceful office, "they will never need to be in better training."

To which Dr. Dick, as surgeon to the corps, remarked to Mr. Frazer that "if they were to be trained at all, they had better be trained to perfection."

And Mr. Frazer, who had been looking upon the introductions from the tail of his gray eye in a neutral manner, said he "hoped it would never matter one way or other."

To get the corps marched from Boulderstone to the battery was no easy task. True, half the sight-seers had already gone out to the cliff to take up their positions, where the Freemasons had ranged themselves, with their top-hats and their blue aprons dashed with spangles. But the other half was still blocking up the streets or the road between the inn and the cliff, in their eagerness to see the first march past of their own corps.

Besides, Lady Dutton and "the gentry" in general were standing at the open window of the inn, looking down at the crowded courtyard, where the evolutions were going on.

"Fall in!" shouted a stentorian but slightly cracked voice from the midst of the yard; and immediately a great elbowing took place from the crowd, and red-striped figures here and there gathered together, and a line was formed. "Number off," yelled the same voice, and Budge, the drummer, hobbled up and down in the space which had been cleared, the wooden stump clothed with the trousers, and the drumming arm scored with the marks of a sergeant. Budge had suddenly risen in the world, and as he cast his eyes over the fellow-townsmen who submitted themselves to his orders, he felt how easy it would have been for him to have rivaled Sir Colin Campbell, had he only had the chance.

"Present arms! Carry arms! Trail arms!"—Budge did not say "arms," he said "awel!" and allowed the sound to die away in the distance, just as if he had been a live officer at Stirling Castle—followed each other in quick succession, and there was a general shifting of carbines, during which, to the intense delight of the smaller spectators, many muzzles and butt-ends came into contact with the heads, shoulders, and legs of the corps itself. Indeed, the shouts of irreverent laughter that rose from the irrepressible critics who were not members of the corps, showed Sir Niel that it was time for him to descend from the window to confer upon the proceedings a properly serious aspect.

"Oh, Lord! Geordie Waters," gasped one fellow with a head of stubble, pointing to a comrade, whom he hardly recognized in his martial gearing.

"Look at boo-legged Sandy Duncan," said another, singling out a well-meaning tailor, who was doing his best to support the unwonted burden of a carbine.

"I declare, if that's no' Thamson's Dumpy Alick," shouted a third.

So that when Sir Niel got on horseback, amid cheers, and rode out in front of them, his presence was very much wanted.

But the corps got to its destination somehow, and the baronet's party, including Mr. Hew Brock and one or two neighboring proprietors, who had ridden in to be spectators, took up their position on a raised dais at the side of the battery, so that the effects of the shots upon the red target in the bay might be seen and applauded.

First of all, Lady Dutton was led along by her son to a position on the right of one of the guns. How Lady Dutton had so far for-

gotten her valetudinarianism as to stand up beside a cannon and do that showy service only requires a word of explanation.

Dr. Dick had treated her to various "shocks," which she admitted had a reviving effect. If she stood the shock of the noise of the cannon, he promised her a long lease of life. Then her life, since her withdrawal from society, had been so meager and uneventful that she was glad to have an opportunity of asserting her dignity in the face of a crowd, and in the home of her late husband's influence.

It had been arranged beforehand that she should fire the first shot, and very courageous and magnificent her ladyship looked to the eyes of the assembled crowd as she stepped up to the guns, and, without a visible tremor, held the string in her hands and waited the signal to pull.

No doubt it was annoying, after the signal was given and the string had been tugged, to find that gunners Troil and Hay had forgotten to put in the ammunition.

A little delay soon put that to rights, and the second time Lady Dutton pulled, the cannon sent forth a flash, and gave so loud a crack that her ladyship's heart leaped within her, and her pulse quickened by a score of beats. She emerged from the smoke, however, calm and dignified, while on every side of her shrieks of amazement rose in the air.

A good deal had been expected; but it was certainly not anticipated that the noise of the gun would have so ear-splitting an effect. As Lady Dutton walked to the dais at the side of the battery, therefore, escorted by the palpitating banker, it was not surprising that most respectable dames should only be recovering from half-fainting fits. Indeed, it was only pride that kept Lady Dutton herself from tottering; but pride did it, and when she had got to her elevated chair and resumed her *pince-nez* to look at the target, the swelling of the cheers re-established her confidence completely. Nor would she consent to take anything out of the flask which Mr. Hew Brock handed to her; Miss Frazer had been compelled to take a little out of it to bring her feeling back to equilibrium.

"How ever did you do it, Lady Dutton?" asked that young lady, revived by the stimulant, and handing back the flask with a knowing look to Mr. Brock. "I would have died with fright before I could have done it."

"You have good nerves, ma'am," said Mr. Frazer from the background, where he was endeavoring to conceal his disgust at the whole proceedings.

But it took all Lady Dutton's nerves to keep from manifesting some sort of emotion; and as she kept her eye fixed on the red target in the sea, she prudently said nothing.

The first big gun practice was far from demolishing the target. The shots played all about it, the effect in the distance being as if a school of whales were blowing—an analogy that suggested itself to every observer present who saw outside the battery.

If they did not smash the target, however, the corps learned that day how to load and discharge; and after they had fallen into line, and after Banker Manson had led off some rounds of complimentary cheers, the baronet stepped forward and said:

"Friends (loud cheers), you don't need any words of mine (yes,

yes) to be assured that the day's proceedings have been entirely satisfactory. I am not, you know, a military man, though I have occupied the honorable position of commanding officer (loud cheers); but I have seen a little of this kind of thing both at home and abroad, and I assure you I consider that in having shot away a couple of bags of powder and no end of iron, we have, for a first attempt, done very well. You have heard a good deal lately about a Russian cruiser standing in from the offing. (Laughter, uproar, and cheers.) Well, I think it that cruiser should feel inclined to look in upon Boulderstone in the event of war, we shall be able to give him a reception which he would not forget." ("Wad ye smash him like the target?" asked an impudent observer from the crowd.) "We would not be so careful of his integrity as we have been of the cask on the horizon, which survives to be aimed at another day. (Laughter.) And in any event, we should be prepared to make a noise, which, against an enemy like the Russians, would count for a good deal. (Laughter.) I hope, however, that the day will never come for us to require to use the loud-speaking couple whose mettle we have to-day tested. We don't want to fight, as the band has been telling us all the morning. We want to live at peace with all the world (hear, hear, from Mr. Frazer, followed by disappointment on the countenances of everybody); at peace, to go on doing the work that lies nearest to our hands—plowing our fields, laying our lines down into the deep, and polishing our paving stones. (Cheers.) With the best intentions, however, we may still be assaulted, and in the hour of assault we must know how to defend ourselves. But there is another reason why I must tell you of my pleasure at seeing you here to-day. I am afraid," looking from a group of round-shouldered fishermen to a crowd of very small boys in a corner, gathered round a tall girl with golden hair, who was leaning forward to catch his words, "I am afraid the nature of your pursuits here don't always give you the chance of holding yourselves as erect and upright as you might be. You have to stoop to the plow, you have to bend to the oars, you are doubled at the pavement works. But a little of this drill, under the tuition of my friend Sergeant Budge (applause, and some jealous murmuring), will assist you to that uprightness of walk and smartness of dress and cleanliness of person (laughter) which industry sometimes destroys. Whether you have to fight or not, then, it seems to me that our big guns will be of some service in the community. I cordially hope they may; and if I can be of any use to the newly made corps, do not hesitate to call on me. This, I trust, is only the beginning of a much closer relationship in the future." (Loud cheers.)

Sir Niel's mild oration made a good impression on the assembled multitude. There was at first a long outburst of applause, and then subdued murmurs of approval, as different groups took it up, and discussed it. His part in the day's work was then completed.

"Who is the young person in the corner of the battery with the children?" asked Lady Dutton, as she poised her *pince-nez* to look at Bertha.

Her son had bowed with special reference to her as they drove away. But she got no reply.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TURN ROUND ABOUT.

MR. FRAZER had a programme to offer at breakfast next morning, and though he was aware that there had been an increase of pleasant looks from the baronet to his daughter, he thought it would do no harm to either of them to put it into immediate execution.

He would like to take a turn round about, he said, and see things for himself. It would be better if Sir Neil could come with him. Sir Neil, indeed, was not so well acquainted with the outs and ins of the Boulderstone estates as to deny that a turn round would be in the nature of a novelty to him. Lady Dutton had several schemes on hand for engaging the attention of Caroline throughout the day, so Mr. Frazer and Sir Neil stepped into a dog-cart and drove off rapidly.

"You will want to see the town first of all; we can spend an hour or so going through it, and then we will follow the road by the cliff westward. That takes us to the edge of the property, five miles along, on that side. We can then strike into the country and come out again upon the river ten miles to the south of the distillery. Old Mackie will give us a good glass of whisky there, I dare say; though he and my father were on rather poor terms."

They drove into the town past the little toll-house at the bridge, where a stout, clear-skinned woman courtesied as they passed, and blushed her satisfaction as the baronet bestowed a pleasant word upon her.

"We'll go to the bank first of all," suggested Mr. Frazer. So at the solid mansion of sandstone, standing in a space by itself outside the square where the markets of Boulderstone were periodically held, the dog-cart pulled up, and the pair invaded the parlor of the local money-changer.

The banker ushered his great visitors into his sanctum with an admirable vocabulary of obeisance. The red-headed senior clerk at the counter went over his master's movements in a tacit pantomime as soon as the door had been closed behind him for the edification of the junior clerk, who had been a year in training, and for the more junior clerk still, whose awe at the spectacle of pound notes in bulk had not yet forsaken him.

In a few minutes the party came out, the banker rubbing his hands, for Mr. Frazer had opened an account which would have swamped the deposits of fifty ordinary customers, and the baronet had been extremely affable.

"That man talks about thousands, Mr. Smith, as if they were florins," said the banker to the red-headed clerk, "and I'm much mistaken if he does not do something for the town and trade that'll make the bank of Boulderstone one of the most important branches in the connection."

"That'll be good for the salaries, sir, I hope," suggested Mr. Smith, with a humility in the tone of his voice out of all proportion to his recent exercise in pantomime.

"Maybe ay and maybe no, Mr. Smith; the bearing of it I had in my mind is upon the interests of the town at large, and not upon the pockets of individuals in particular. But there are persons that can only take the narrow view of things," he concluded, with a snort of disgust.

Mr. Smith was silent, though he gradually edged his thumb to his nose, and maneuvered himself into a safe position, so that the junior clerk should be properly impressed with his general contempt for bald-headed authority.

The banker, Mr. Manson, was a little piqued at the silence which succeeded. He had been closeted with a great capitalist, and with the lord of the manor, and yet his head-clerk never put a question to elicit any information.

"Do you not understand," he suddenly exploded, "that Mr. Frazer is a millionaire; that he holds securities in land, and has interests in America and the colonies that are said to amount to more than the total capital of the bank we serve?"

"You don't say so, sir."

"I do say so, and what is more, Mr. Charles Frazer uses his means so that no man can say of him that it is for his own selfish interests. No man is more respected in the South."

Mr. Smith immediately resolved that he should be appointed patron of the flute band of which he was leader, that he should be asked to subscribe to the cricket club, and that the defunct debating society should be resuscitated, as a means of conveying some more guineas from the pocket of the millionaire so long as he was in the neighborhood.

Meanwhile, Sir Neil and Mr. Frazer having strolled into the High Street introduced themselves to Mr. Harkness, the postmaster, who, with a stick of sealing-wax in one hand and a letter-bag in the other, and his spectacles far up his eyebrow, followed them to the door in a high condition of obsequiousness. Then as they advanced down the pathway the town-drummer, who was beating a splendid military *reveille* over a cargo of coals which had arrived that morning at the river-mouth, and which were announced as of a superior cheapness, drew up in the midst of his rat-tat-tat, to give a military salute to the baronet.

"Well, Budge, you haven't forgotten that magnificent drum-beat," said Sir Neil, stepping out to shake hands with the municipal functionary.

"No, your honor. I played Sir Colin Campbell into Delhi with that rattle, and it cost me a leg, and I'm not likely to forget it. Much obliged to you, sir;" and the drummer retired with a half a crown shaken into his hand.

Then came Kirstin Small, with her basket of codfish under her arm, and courtesying, told the baronet a pitiful tale of a husband bedridden and twelve of a family supported by the oldest son. Kirstin also retired with some silver between her fingers, which, where the "jile" showed its barred windows, encouraged "feel Sandy" to approach with a look of expectation on his face, and he, too, had a gift given him.

From the High Street to the Brae-head was no distance, and as the pair emerged there was a score of fishermen sitting on the seat

under the shed fronting the broad sea, while at the flag-staff stood a brisk-looking man, with a brown face, pausing for a moment in his walk to gaze about him.

"Well, lads, how is the weather to-day?" said Sir Neil, pleasantly, stepping in among them to tap the barometer, which stood in the center of the shed.

"Falling, falling—stormy weather, I fear, in store for us," he added, addressing at random one old sou'-westered head.

"Ay, ay, Sir Neil Dutton, it'll be stormy weather gey an' soon, I'm thinkin'," piped the old man in question, as if he were announcing a prophecy.

"What, Dykes, is this you, my old friend? Still in the land of the living, and likely to be for some long time to come. Why you miraculous old man, you're younger than you were when you fished me out of the pool at the back of the castle. This is the 'oldest inhabitant,' Mr. Frazer."

Mr. Frazer eyed him sideways, as if he were a lobster or some other crustacean with habits that you could not predict.

"You must be ninety, Dykes, if you are a day."

"It's all that, sir," said Dykes, enjoying to the full the importance of seniority. "I havena been up the toon past the square for twenty years."

"I dare say the churches are an obstacle," said Sir Neil to his friend, dispensing at the same time the half-crown of charity.

"Is this our friend Captain Jansen at the flag-staff?" asked Mr. Frazer.

"Yes, Captain Jansen, sir," said half a dozen voices; and the captain, hearing his name mentioned, joined the group with a frank, "Morning, gentlemen."

"Do you sail from this place, cap'n?" inquired Mr. Frazer, who then saw him face to face for the first time, and looked him all over from head to foot.

"Not I, sir. I believe I'm done with the sea now. Anyway, I have nothing more to do than come down here and look at the ships and yarn with the lads a bit."

Mr. Frazer made a movement with his nostrils as if he must inhale an odor of bad spirits in the neighborhood of a man so idly disposed, and suggested to the baronet that they had better be going.

"Well, what do you think of my town?" asked Sir Neil when they had driven out of the west side of it in the direction of the small stream where the permanent industry was in operation.

"I would like to drive a fire-engine through it and squirt the hose on them. It's well seen they have been under Tory domination: a pack of beggars."

Sir Neil accepted the joke for what it was worth and smiled.

Mr. Frazer continued, "Do you know, I wonder at you giving money out of your pocket on the public streets to one and another of these people. If there's anything that sets up my back it's that. If I were to die this moment, I would die with the feeling that I have never throughout all my public career given a single penny to a beggar at my door or to a person importuning me on the streets."

"Come, that perhaps accounts for your position as a millionaire," replied Sir Neil, piqued a little at the tone of the criticism.

Mr. Frazer saw he was allowing his irritation to get the better of him, and set off on a new tack.

"I take it on the ground of political principles purely. What would Adam Smith or Ricardo or Cobden say to it?"

Mr. Frazer had not the remotest idea what they might have said to it, but he knew that Sir Neil Dutton, as an embryo politician, had been dipping into all three.

"Well, if you put it on that ground, of course there's nothing to be said for it. Budge, I dare say, will spend his half-crown at the Whale's Head, Kirstin may indulge in unlimited potations of tea, and Dykes—Heaven knows what Dykes at ninety can do with half a crown. But I haven't quite made up my mind yet about political economy. It is undeniably bad to encourage idleness. But to translate the propositions of political economy into practice at the corners of every street seems to me too much of a good thing."

"Where will you begin, if you don't begin at the corners of the streets? And these beggars, there's no law for them but the hose."

They now drove into the yards beside the stream, where the capitalist really began to pick up his spirits a little. There was a respectable-sized brick chimney at the further end of the yard, and it smoked. There were about fifty frameworks and stands, on which one flag-stone was hard at work polishing the face of its neighbor. Carts were unloading, and men's voices were mingling in a confused sound that made music to Mr. Frazer's ear. A door opened into a machine-room beside the chimney, and the capitalist, stepping down from the dog-cart, looked radiant. He stood for a few moments with the warm flavor of oil coming out to him, and when he turned to Sir Neil his visage wore a look of satisfaction.

"We can make something out of this, I think. But oh, they're primitive. What are the yards here for, eh? They have to cart to and from this place, when they might do the whole thing at the river-side."

"Well, I never thought of that; but it would be inconveniently near the garden-wall of Boulderstone, don't you think?"

Mr. Frazer said nothing, but he took notes and made up his mind on the spot.

From the pavement yards they drove some miles further round to the harbor and light-house, on the inside of the Sandstone Head, above which the village of Sandstone had its score or two of families located in straw-thatched cottages. Before the village was reached there was a stiff pull some hundred feet up a brae, which hardly seemed to improve Mr. Frazer's temper.

"And this is Sandstone!" he exclaimed. "It's partly yours and Brock's."

"You seem to know the property better than I do myself," rejoined Sir Neil; and the pair walked from cottage to cottage.

Most of the men were out lobster-fishing, so there was not much opportunity for taking stock of their appearance. But enough was exhibited to sustain the displeasure of Mr. Frazer.

"I can not congratulate you on your tenants, Sir Neil. Bairns, bairns, bairns, plenty of them and to spare—a dozen to a cottage,"

he continued, as a cluster of woolly-pated youngsters gathered at the doors to peer with open mouths at the new arrivals. "And they all have their patch of land, and a poor use they make of it. It is nice land, too."

Sir Neil looked in at one open door, where the same old man in a red cotton nightcap, who was so rudely burst in upon by Mr. Hew Brock a short time before, was still administering blows to the heel of a huge sea-boot. He was sitting at that moment in a pathway of sunlight, and the baronet pointed him out.

"Well, there's energy for you, at any rate. You couldn't beat that in any workshop in the kingdom."

Their shadows went athwart the old cobbler, and looking up, he rose, came forward, and touched his forelock.

"What's your wull, gentlemen? Sir, I'm glad to see your father's son among us again," he added, as he recognized the baronet.

"Well, Spence, the village is all at sea except yourself and the children. How are you?"

"Finely, Sir Neil; and how's her leddyship?" wiping a knife upon the edge of his leather apron. "Will ye do me the honor, sir, to step across my door?"

"Not this time," said Sir Neil, as his companion passed on, peering, with a slightly contorted visage, among the dung-heaps, the gardens, the muddy ducks, and the weather-beaten hens. "How is the lobster-fishing getting along?"

"Just middlin', sir. We've had a heap o' damage wi' the great north-easter o' the 18th o' March. No man ever predicted such a high tide as yon, and we've but a couple o' boats among us. But we should be well pleased we are no worse. They lost six at Boulderstone, and some o' them, I'm told, is hard put to it for a bit noo."

Mr. Frazer was by this time standing at the corner of the very last cottage, from which he was overlooking the Atlantic on the left hand and the wide sweep of the bay on the right. The prospect might have soothed a less active mind. It showed a wide, circuitous shore-line, where the surf was rolling in picturesque whiteness in the further corners of the bay; Boulderstone Castle presided over the river mouth; at his feet the Sandstone harbor and its steamboat floating along-side.

He was in no mood, however, to be appeased by any outward view of things, and Sir Neil joining him, he walked for nearly a couple of miles in silence, until they met the dog-cart at a farmstead on their way inland. Here they talked to a stout, rosy person over a gate, the tenant of the farm; after which they cut across the country to the inner boundary of the estates, marked by a tall chimney in a dell where Mackie's distillery was.

Here there was no one in authority except a "gauger" to receive them, and he had no power to be hospitable, being an ally of the Government, whose duty it was to understand how much spirit was manufactured, and to see that none of it escaped its proper amount of taxation.

As he returned back at a rattling pace to be in time for a rather late dinner, Mr. Frazer had recovered some of his lost equanimity.

He saw that there had been no more unnecessary half-crowns given away, and he thought he knew the worst about the town and estates.

"As a first impression, what would you feel inclined to say about things?" asked Sir Neil, as they approached Boulderstone again.

"I think, in the first place, there are too many people here. The town itself could do all the work there is with half the population. There must be six dogs worrying at each bone. You don't need Sandstone at all. There's a sprinkling of small crofters all over the estates that are worth nothing. We will make Boulderstone bring in its own income when Boulderstone has got rid of its unnecessary dependents."

"How are we to do that?" asked Sir Neil.

"Do it? The thing'll have to do itself. The estates must pay," said Mr. Frazer, with perfect confidence and decision.

CHAPTER XXII.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

CAROLINE FRAZER began to discover that her engagement with Sir Neil Dutton was rather more dreary than she had anticipated. She liked him well enough; he was handsome, he had soft dark eyes that always looked at her kindly, he had a strong arm, as she had felt once or twice, and he had a commanding presence, but he somehow or other talked a great deal about things that had no bearing upon Caroline Frazer, and that Caroline Frazer could not for the life of her understand. And he was more kind than passionate, she told herself, and not so observant of the details of her beauty as she had been accustomed to find many of the admirers who had surrounded her since she gave up being a school miss three years ago.

"Carry," said Sir Neil to her one Sunday night as they were standing at the old library window commanding a long view of the Atlantic, "what on earth makes you read a book of that sort?"

"Oh, I'm not reading it at all, but papa will not let me have anything in my hand on a Sabbath except it is a good book. He never reads anything but good books himself. If you were to break in upon him upstairs, you would find him with a Bible, or a thing with parallel texts, or a volume of sermons, or something. I can hardly get him to speak above his breath on a Sabbath; and in Edinburgh he always goes to church three times a day, and has a class of boys that he teaches in the evening."

The young man gave her a look of surprise.

"I knew, you know, that he interested himself in Church movements, but I had no idea he carried it to so great a length. Of course, I don't mind about that sort of thing, although I am glad you don't share his opinions about the kind of books to read on a Sunday. We agree upon a good many things, he and I, but upon the matter of Sunday observance and Sunday reading I hope we shall never have to exchange any opinion, as we should differ most strongly."

"Oh, but I don't care a bit about reading—not a bit. I have some novels upstairs, and I really can't read any of them, though they are by the best authors."

"Who are the best authors, Carry?"

"Well, the author of the 'Fly on the Wheel,' 'Breach of the Seventh,' 'Cut it Short;' but except bits of them I weary of them," said the heiress.

"I don't wonder. Couldn't you try some of these?" linking his arm in hers and walking off to the bookcase. "My father was a poor reader of modern fiction, but you see he has all the best of the last century on these shelves."

Caroline looked up, and thought if her father was bad her lover was worse. The idea of asking her to read anything a century old! She had a devouring anxiety to be caressed, however, so she freed herself from his arms, put one little foot on the step of a bookcase ladder, and nimbly sped up until she was able to overlook him. In that position she read off half a dozen titles of books with animation—"Tom Jones," "Roderick Random," "Humphrey Clinker," "Sentimental Journey"—"

"Lower down, Carry, lower down; never mind these; I don't think you would care much about any of them."

"Quentin Durward,' 'Ivanhoe,' 'The Pirate'—"

"Yes, these," said Sir Neil, "even though you may have read them half a dozen times."

"I never heard their names before," said Caroline, making a sudden feint as if she were falling, so that Sir Neil had to reach out his arms, lift her off the steps, catch the gleam of her laughing eyes, and hold her in mid-air for one moment as their faces met.

Caroline was charmed, and as the pair walked out upon the bulwark they felt that after all it was pleasant to love and to be loved.

"Light your cigar, Neil, I don't mind it in the least; in fact, I rather like it."

The baronet complied very readily, and sitting in the recess of the window upon a worn old seat of red sandstone—Sir Neil having put a warm wrap round Carry—they looked cozily out upon the sea.

"This is nice, and I'm quite getting to like Boulderstone. I thought it an awful dungeon at first; but it's nothing of the kind, and the air's as mild as anything. I declare there's a swallow!"

"Oh, they build all over the place," said Sir Neil, tranquilly puffing his cigar. "We always like to encourage them, taking it for a good sign that they should choose our windows to build in. You remember the passage in 'Macbeth:'

"This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd,
The air is delicate."

Sir Neil had a pleasant voice for recitation, and might have been tempted to draw a little further on his stores of poetical recollection; but Caroline was not encouraging, though she said, "It's beautiful. I'm sure you're quite the poet, Neil."

"Quite the poet," he repeated. "No, I haven't much poetry in

my composition; I never knew a man, in fact, who had less, and who had more of the business faculty. Let's talk business, Carry: what should you and I do quoting poetry, even though the curlevs out there are calling to their mates in their dirge-like tones?"

Carry looked at him as if he were forsaking his sense, and again repeated, "I'm sure you're quite the poet."

"Not a bit of it, Carry. You have no reason to be alarmed. I assure you I am as sane as you are."

She shifted her position a little so as to lean upon him, and for five minutes the two were silent.

Caroline sighed from time to time as if she had reached elysium, and when Sir Neil spoke again it was in a more softened tone, as if he had reasoned himself into a more genial state of mind.

"I'm sure you will be glad to know, Carry, that by your father's incomparable management I expect Boulderstone to become self-supporting again. That is his opinion after his first investigation, and there is every prospect of my being able to begin public life without being hampered at all with a load of debt."

"How could you have any debt," asked Caroline, with the perhaps unconscious purpose of increasing her own value in her lover's estimation, "and my father a millionaire? I dare say he could pay off all the debts as easily as I can pay a milliner's bill."

Sir Neil winced, and was silent for a little again.

"But, my dear girl, I won't have your father paying the debts either of myself or my family."

He disliked the position very much, probably because he felt that to be happy he must have some chivalry in his affection for her.

"Beside," he continued, quickly, as if to get away from a suggestion that was disagreeable to him—"beside, Boulderstone lost ground through sheer mismanagement. There is no reason why it should not yield an independent income suitable for all the demands of public life. And talking of public life, I hardly know what to make of the proposal in connection with the borough of Westlands made by your father. He takes for granted I shall stand as a Whig. Now, all my people have been Tory through the whole line of the Duttons; and I am surprised that your father, who is a Radical, should take my standing as a Whig so easily. He seems to think that it is the best compromise for one so closely connected with Conservatism."

"But, Neil, aren't all the lords and dukes Conservative?"

"Well, no, not all of them; a good many are, though."

"You would be far better to be a Conservative, then; I would like you to be on that side."

"You are not talking seriously?"

"No," said Caroline, who felt she was on the verge of being unpopular.

"My difficulty is this in connection with party. As you know, Caroline, you who have been so closely connected with the people, and who understand them a hundred times better than I do—"

"Indeed I don't," said Caroline, who felt as if some aspersion were being cast upon her origin.

"But you do know that, as a matter of fact, there are great questions coming up about the masses of the people, questions that one

would like to assist in solving. I've been a great deal about the world within the last year or two, and I've seen something of the same feeling everywhere among the same classes. I've talked to men in the open gardens of Vienna, Berlin, Brussels, New York, London, and Paris, and I find that, far from being happy, without cares, they are, as a rule, profoundly unhappy and restless. I find the same on my estates; there are far more people miserable than contented"—Caroline put up her little hand to stop a yawn, which her lover did not notice—"and there is reason for it too. It isn't because human beings are more prone to misery than to happiness; it is because the pressure of circumstances makes them miserable. Well, my feeling, Carry, is that to be on the political side which will help the majority to have happier lives, is the proper place for one who should work heartily at politics. I should like to know, however, what side offers them the largest chance of such happiness. Sometimes I am tempted to think that Radicalism has the key to the situation. Then I seem to see the tumbling at the lock, and to hear the roar of the unsatisfied on the other side of the gate. Sometimes Conservatism looks as if it might give the happiness for which the many pine. Then I find those who are pledged to it jealous and timid—jealous of encroachments on their ancient rights, timid because the masses may rise up, and seize what is indefinitely postponed. And it occurs to me that politics—the fight of the committee which is out to become the committee which is in—may perhaps do little for the working masses. What they want they must work out for and by themselves—and in that way lies revolution, it may be." He looked at the girl beside him, a daughter of the people, as he told himself, in spite of her value in the market of matrimony. He looked for sympathy in his doubts, some word or hint that she saw, even afar off, the perplexities that gathered round his path.

Caroline was dozing heavily.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOWING THE WIND.

MR. FRAZER had not been long in Boulderstone before he had all his schemes matured for rescuing the estates. With a plan of all the parishes in the county before him, he had chalked off in blue and red what was to come of this steading and that, of this quarry and the next, of hamlets, and mills, and roads, foreshores, and lanes. He had one aim before him, to make the estates pay, and, a certain number of obstacles intervening, the problem was to remove them as swiftly as possible. One obstacle was the disposition of the baronet himself. Love, Mr. Frazer had calculated, would occupy a large part of his time; but it was turning out that love had a smaller share of his attention than had been anticipated. The baronet was having too much time on his hands. Too much, because, from what Mr. Frazer chose to consider softness of disposition, as shown in the instance of Heatherhead, and giving away alms, a tendency to reckless acts of generosity might further develop.

So, in addition to having his daughter to woo, he resolved that Sir Neil should have the borough of Westlands on his hands as well.

Westlands must in the course of six months get rid of its present member, if Mr. Frazer's calculations were right. He hoped, therefore, that by opening a brisk correspondence with the local chiefs of the Liberal party in Westlands, and getting his agents there to ply Sir Neil with letters requiring answers, that his time and attention would be in a great measure withdrawn from Boulderstone. He further arranged that blue books, statistics, reports, and the paraphernalia of statesmanship that seemed most likely to appeal to the young man's vanity and feeling for public life should flow in upon him.

With the baronet thus occupied he promised himself that one obstacle should be removed, in the event of trouble rising in the community.

Mr. Frazer was not ignorant of the management of land. He was, in fact, chairman of a company which owned a territory three times the size of Scotland; and it was admittedly his management and personal surveillance at the other side of the world that had made the company one of the most prosperous concerns in the market.

But his knowledge of land was gained in a new country, and when he set himself to the adjustment of the Boulderstone property he did it on precisely the same principle as he had applied to the sheep ranges of Brisbane. It was the only way he saw a prospect of making the thing pay, though he was not blind to the fact that Boulderstone, as an old property, presented urban difficulties he had never encountered in Brisbane.

The first principle of Mr. Frazer's policy was to clear out all the inhabitants whom he could either persuade or force to go.

It suited him to have as many emigrants as he could get of an industrious, thrifty sort, for the Brisbane estates were in want of a few hundred such families.

By depleting Boulderstone he meant to feed Brisbane, making his projects fit into each other at the same time. But he had too long an acquaintanceship with affairs to suppose that it could be done without a little rough work.

In the first place, there was the hamlet of Sandstone to be cleared out, and it was Brock's property as much as Dutton's; and the former, as the son of a Dundee merchant-prince, might be expected to throw certain obstacles in the way. He would at least be certain to higgie and bargain. On his map, therefore, he had the red mark of obliteration for the hamlet, and in his note-book a sign mark of conciliation for Brock.

Then there was the languishing industry of the pavement works, which supported so many laboring men in Boulderstone. It was not to be blotted out, so as to fit in with the emigration scheme. On the contrary, Mr. Frazer had feasted two or three commissioners of works in his Edinburgh club, and already he had before him orders for slate and pavement which were to be supplied during the summer and autumn to certain municipalities in the East.

Quarries and works in consequence were to be set on at an increased rate of labor. But a change must be made in the works;

they must be removed from the stream two miles round the bay to the river-mouth, so as to be in easy proximity to the shipping. For that object it was necessary to take down a large part of the fishermen's houses on the foreshore.

The fishermen must be warned out, the houses acquired, and the foreshore made available for the new yards. Mr. Frazer never asked himself where the inhabitants were to go after they were turned out. They were useless, so far as his immediate purpose was concerned. That was enough. It was not in his scheme to make them useful in their own line as fishermen. One thing at a time, he said to himself—the fish alter the slates. The loafers must in the first instance clear out.

Of course there would be murmuring among the fishermen; a little crying out, perhaps a display of soft-heartedness on the part of Sir Neil Dutton. Vaguely Mr. Frazer foresaw all that, but business had nothing to do with the contemplation of such difficulties, except to contemplate them as thrust aside and overcome.

In connection with the work of clearing the foreshore, Mr. Frazer had noted down two names—Miss Bertha St. Clair and Captain Jansen—as either allies or enemies. He had information to the effect that the captain was about to marry Miss St. Clair, and that the latter owned some tenements right in the heart of the spot where his new yards were to be. He would deal with them as friends in the first instance; and the view of the captain he had obtained at the Brae-head gave him a poor impression of his capacities; if they would not be induced to deal pleasantly he would crush them. The school-mistress would be deprived of her school; and the captain's investments being known to Mr. Frazer, it was not difficult to devise annoyances for him that might in the long-run lead to poverty.

The fishermen being disposed of, the capitalist proposed another scheme to himself immediately affecting the welfare of the town. There was an immense number of small dealers in Boulderstone—drapers, grocers, mixed merchants who sold everything, and one or two who confined themselves to tins, books, boots, and watches. One or two of them were living in the villas on the river-side, having made moderate competences.

It had occurred to Mr. Frazer that the establishment of one large shop in the square, at co-operative prices, which would supply the country villages as well as the town, would be a boon to the town and a great source of profit. It need not be carried on in the name of the castle—that would be obnoxious to ancient pride; it would be easily arranged, however, so that another man managed it while the profits flowed toward the Dutton account at the local bank.

In that way Boulderstone would become an active producing center, dependent for wages and for existence to a large extent on the castle. Not that Mr. Frazer saw much to be obtained from a revived feudalism of that description. He cared nothing about local power at Boulderstone; he had plenty of it on a large scale elsewhere. But as a means of recruiting the baronet's income, he felt assured that such feudalism would be thoroughly effective. He congratulated himself on the fact that trades-unionism had not reached the town. The laborers knew nothing except by hearsay of what their brethren further south had done for themselves by com-

bination. Their wages had therefore hitherto varied little from a fixed, low level. In view of the fact that they had no unions, Mr. Frazer calculated that a reduction of wages at all the quarries and in the yards might with safety be undertaken. The obstacles to be overcome in the country before his policy was successfully applied did not seem so formidable. He had already remarked a number of tall Scandinavian farmers with as much critical delight as the German king is said to have surveyed his big guards. In the colonies these men would be priceless; at Boulderstone they were wanting both in means and energy.

Some of these he could prevail upon to go by force of reason, and could even stretch a point to help on their way to the other side of the world. The rest must shift for themselves, like the fishermen whose houses he had already leveled in imagination.

The red mark of obliteration ran round the whole circuit of the estate; wherever, in fact, leases had fallen in, for the moderately small-sized farms were to become large expanses for the pasture of sheep or deer, as afterward seemed most remunerative. At least sixty families must, consequently, move during the course of the summer.

To achieve his ends at the smallest cost of trouble, Mr. Frazer looked about for useful allies. Mr. Hew Brock, as a land-owner on an extensive scale, was one of them; two of the Boulderstone pastors were the others; for at the bottom of the whole scheme he liked to think that Providence was working; and he knew that if people were to be brought round to the same view there must be clergymen to make the subject plain, with apt and telling illustrations drawn from texts of Scripture and from the depths of their own imagination. Mr. Frazer did not spring his plans of operation upon the town all at once, though during the winter months he had been stealthily preparing various minds for the reception of it. He did not explain to Sir Neil Dutton in full detail what he meant to do. But bit by bit the baronet was to find out for himself when he could withdraw himself from courtship and the borough of Westlands.

And after all, the touch of prosperity had been so long, so firm, so assured in the undertakings of the plutocrat, that he hoped there might be no reason for Sir Neil being troubled with Boulderstone affairs till, at least, the marriage was completed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

"I would like you to be a little civil and attentive to Mr. Brock," said Mr. Frazer to his daughter one evening. "I'm not sure whether Sir Neil is going to take to him—I rather think not; and it's not of much consequence, but I've some business to do with him, and I would like you to pay him a little attention."

Caroline understood the injunction. She had heard it frequently, and had a mechanical manner at command for all the people recommended to her notice in that way. It pleased her more than usual to be told that she was to show some attention to the neighboring

land-owner. He was as unlike her betrothed as he could possibly be, yet for that very reason she was attracted to him.

She thought him manly, strong, and spirited. The more, in fact, she knew of Sir Neil the less she understood him. Mr. Brock, on the other hand, she had met but once at the battery, and in a few words he seemed to reveal his whole nature. He was a man she could be familiar with on the shortest notice. He was "joky," and made eyes at her, which she liked; in his glance she detected just that amount of personal admiration that it was pleasant for her to receive from an outsider. For once, therefore, her father's injunction was quite in accordance with her own feeling. She looked forward to showing civility with a little flutter of satisfaction, for the distractions of Boulderstone were few as yet.

Her father's yacht was coming round from the Clyde one of these days, and when it arrived there were several trips to be made, which, though with a darker sea and more gaunt surroundings, she hoped might remind her lover of the earlier Mediterranean time, and bring back some of the greater warmth which his attentions then had.

Meanwhile, as she had not learned to fish trout or salmon, and had no curiosity to try for them, and was much too timid to venture her little person on horseback, she found time hang rather heavy on her hands.

There was not long to wait before an opportunity of being civil to Mr. Hew Brock occurred. About an hour after Mr. Frazer's talk with his daughter her maid told her that a stout gentleman, with a red face, had just had his horse taken round to the stables, and a little later, as Lady Dutton was unable to leave her room, and the baronet was on the river somewhere, Caroline had essayed his entertainment.

Mr. Brock was delighted beyond measure that chance had given him Caroline as a hostess. As he stood before her, large, impressive, and genial, according to his manner, Caroline naturally had resort to her most alluring shrugs of the shoulder, little protrusions and withdrawals of her neat feet, and knowing flashes of her brown eyes.

The Laird of Lobster Keep looked rather better than he was wont on this occasion. He was booted and spurred, and otherwise carried with him the air of a country gentleman. Above all, the flavor of the fields was in his garments, and Caroline could not help contrasting him with her own lover.

"I hope you don't care about politics and improvements in land?" she said, when the first greetings had been got over.

"Da—I beg pardon. Hang it, no; I like riding across country. Hunting and shooting suits me. My estates are down in sheep, you know; I have no improvements to make."

He took the left wing of his mustache in his forefinger and thumb, and deliberately gazed at her for some moments on the back of that response.

"I'm quite glad," said Caroline, coquettishly; "I hear nothing else talked in the castle, and I'm sure I don't yet know a Whig from a Tory, and I'm not caring."

"I like that, da—hang it," replied Mr. Brock, shifting his hand

to the other wing of his mustache, and glancing down at her with a look something between a leer and a grimace.

"By George, Miss Frazer, would you excuse me? but I'm as dry as sawdust."

"Certainly," and Caroline had soda and brandy ordered for him. She took a little herself, remembering dutifully her father's injunction that she was to show some attention to Mr. Brock.

The laird took a long draught, sighed, and looked at his young hostess as if an idea had struck him.

"I'm sure I've seen you at a hop at Dundee. Do you know the Milroys and the Benvies?"

"Oh, yes. Miss Benvie lived a week in Edinburgh with me—a spiteful cat. I didn't like her."

Mr. Brock expanded his chest, and threw out a great whinnying laugh. Caroline was flattered. He took his place beside her on the couch, at a respectful distance. Then she alluded to Sir Neil, and he managed to get his spurs entangled in a fancy sofa-blanket which hung drooping over the couch.

"Da—hang it! I've made my housekeeper take everything of this sort out of my drawing-room. I can't stand them."

He became disentangled presently, and Caroline, in a tone of approving menace, told him that "*such* stories were going" about him in Boulderstone.

"Stories!" and Mr. Brock, making a mental inventory of all the breaches of the moral law he had committed during the last three weeks, looked hard at Caroline to understand how much it would affect her estimate of him if they should happen to be known to her.

"I was a devil of a fellow in Dundee. But this is an awful quiet place. I'm going to marry and settle down."

"So am I," said Caroline, briskly, feeling that under such circumstances there was the fullest license for a flirtation.

"But you haven't been a—a—da—hang it?"

"A 'devil of a fellow,'" interposed Caroline, speaking into her tumbler; "no, no, my father's an elder."

"So's mine; but that didn't keep me from having my fling."

And Mr. Brock whinnied again, finding his listener sympathetic. "You're the sort of a girl that shouldn't marry. I say, Miss Frazer, I've seen you at a hop at Milroy's."

"Oh, well, if you have I've forgotten you," Caroline said, tartly. She had reason to remember the occasion. Mrs. Milroy had been obliged to tell her she was taking too much champagne, and the state of her own head next morning had strengthened the memory of the insult; the whispered warning had been overheard by some military gentlemen from Stirling not likely to forget it, and Caroline hated the memory of the whole affair, and gave a disagreeable turn to the conversation by exclaiming,

"Is it true, Mr. Brock, that one of the Sandstone fishermen knocked you down?"

"Me down! Not very likely. I had to knock one of them down for insolence."

"Because he wouldn't let you kiss his wife," laughed Caroline.

"Oh, da—ha! you know, Miss Frazer, I never wanted to kiss

her; I am surprised you would believe it about me;" and with a flushed leer on his face, before Caroline could prevent him, his arm was about her waist.

"I'll ring for the butler—upon my word I will," she repeated, as the laird kept looking into her face.

"No you won't. What would you do that for? If you had been in Dundee for a week you would have been my wife. After I saw you at Milroy's hop I wrote to you."

"There's Sir Neil;" and Caroline rose flurriedly on hearing wheels on the gravel outside. "You must meet him yourself, Mr. Brock. How could I meet him after such behavior on your part? I've a good mind to tell him."

But it was not Sir Neil; it was only a cart full of last year's leaves; so Caroline resumed her seat, at a distance from her visitor.

"You're an awful man; I hope you'll never come here again."

"Hang it, Miss Frazer, I was thinking I would go away back to Dundee. But I won't do it now."

They were still sitting when Lady Dutton entered the drawing-room a little later on, scornful and patronizing to the mill-owner's son, who held the old lands of her dead neighbors.

Mr. Frazer left the castle to go up the hill to Juniper Bank. He was in no very gracious humor as he looked over the ridge of the river into Bertha's garden, and upon the chimneys of her cottage. The visit was one, he felt, he had no right to make; but on approaching Captain Jansen on the question of his houses on the foreshore, that worthy said he had considered the matter with Miss St. Clair, and he had determined not to sell.

"Bless me," said the astonished negotiator, who offered a fair price for the houses, "what's a man of your years and experience handing his business over to that girl for?"

And the captain had only held his peace and looked at him contemptuously, his rejection of all terms being made much more effective in silence than if he had spoken the most vehement words.

It had made a permanent impression on Mr. Frazer at any rate. As he let himself into Bertha's garden, he saw her at her porch bidding farewell to a thick-set, bronzed fellow in a pilot-jacket. He was one of her pupils, who had passed as third mate, and who had been to tell her of a summons to join his ship at Greenock for the East Indies. All that he knew Bertha had taught him, and in the quiet earnestness of his face he was trying to impress his sense of that debt.

Mr. Frazer only saw in it a sailor lad paying attention to a girl. At first he had a mind to return to Boulderstone without pretending to consult her in the matter of the property on the foreshore. Consult a mere girl, who entertained sailor lads at her cottage door, the thing was absurd! He was not certain that he might not even compromise his character by conversation with her. Only her cottage was remote from view, and the sailor had taken his departure.

"I'm thinking I've driven your sweetheart off," said Mr. Frazer, approaching the porch from which Bertha had stepped. He spoke in a brusque, sudden voice, and his eye sharply ran her over from head to foot.

"He is a pupil." Bertha was taken aback, and hardly knew how to address the unflinching little man in front of her.

"Are your pupils all that size and age at the charity-school?" he asked, spying, as he thought, an advantage.

Bertha had recovered herself. "My pupils of the charity-school are mostly children," she answered, firmly, meeting the side glance of the cold, gray eyes with a direct, straightforward look.

"I would think," he continued, "that it was not very seemly for a young person of your age, holding a public position in the town, to receive men about your house."

"Have you come to deliver that message from those who appointed me?" asked Bertha, her voice trembling with indignation.

"I have received men in my cottage when and how I have pleased. You may mean your advice to be kind. It is not kind; it is insolent. Sir, I know who you are. You have not come here with a good intention—" Then Bertha's words almost choked her, and she turned from him.

Mr. Frazer had a great mind to withdraw; the idea of doing business with an unreasonable young termagant of that sort seemed more absurd than ever; it would be flattering her vanity.

He thought better of it, however; and Bertha coming back, with her face pale, and her clear, large eyes having more sorrow than anger in them, he began in a different key.

"You're the proprietor of some houses on the foreshore, Captain Jansen tells me. Sir Neil Dutton is anxious to acquire them, and I want you to say how much it is to cost us to get them into our hands."

"I am no proprietor. Captain Jansen could not have said I owned houses. I own none. But we have heard that you are to pull the houses down, and to let the people go to the moors or the rocks, and we will not allow it."

He looked at her with a movement of contempt. "We—who are we?—the skipper and you! Do you know what you're talking about? You've got that man Jansen under your thumb. Do you suppose that what you will allow or not allow can affect the improvements in Boulderstone town and estates? I'll say no more either to you or your paramour on the subject; but it will be better for you to cultivate a little humility."

And the millionaire turned on his heel and left.

CHAPTER XXV.

ACROSS THE HARBOR BAR.

"GET oot o' my rod, ye muckle lump," said Jean Scott to Oscar, next morning, as she made her way to the captain's parlor with a tray, on which there was a dish of chops, two duck eggs in an egg-cozey, and a cut of sea trout.

"Noo, cap'n, I will not permit ye to leave the hoose on an empty stammack," she remarked to Captain Jansen, who laid aside his pipe, furtively, at his housekeeper's approach.

"It's mair nor a week than ye've taen a breakfast, an' folk wad

say it was drink that kent nae better. Ye maun eat, cap'n. I'm sure there's no a better cookit breakfast in a' Boultherstone this day."

The captain surveyed the uncovered contents of the tray, and remarked that she had provided for three.

"An' what for noo? A halesome man aye eats for three. I'm sure I'm just fair distrackit wi' ye. I kenna what's wrang. An' ye'll no tak' pouthers nor peels nor onything. I'll just gang ower to Dr. Dick's o' my ain accord, an' ask his advice whither ye wull or no', if ye dinna eat better. I wad say it wis the smock, smock, smockin', if I didna ken that to'ac'cy's been meat an' drink to ye a' yer days. Get oot o' my rod, ye muckle lump," as Oscar approached his nose to the captain's plate.

The severity of the housekeeper's tone impressed the dog as little as it did the captain. Oscar knew that, like the bark of some of his acquaintances, it was the most serious thing about her. And the master of the house sat down to his solitary meal, while Oscar eyed him with a gentle expectancy of expression which was specially rewarded by an entire chop. Captain Jansen's lack of appetite was the result of the concentration of his mind, heart, and imagination upon one subject. He was haunted by Bertha St. Clair. The girl had become a second self to him, and yet he dared not tell her so. She was so young, he felt; he was so old. It would not be fair to her, for her own sake, to hint that which possessed his thoughts in his waking and in his sleeping hours. He, an old captain, with more than fifty summers over his head, how should he hope to make the fresh young girl respond to any summons of love? Yet he could not choose but occupy himself with thoughts of her, and sometimes he believed that he would risk the breaking of this present friendship by making a proposal of marriage. But there was a shyness in the adoration of Captain Jansen; when his heart was most full, it was often then that he seemed most commonplace. Even the exquisite instinct and sympathetic understanding of Bertha St. Clair failed to detect in him a love which was deeper than protecting friendship.

The love of Captain Jansen, coming to him in his mature years, had in it something of pathos through its very speechlessness. If it had been young, it would have been its own great reward; for youth revels in the luxury of its own emotion, without knowledge of anything beyond. Captain Jansen's looking-glass told him twice a day that it would not be very long before age had definitely marked him. So he remained an irresolute man, taking his cue in life from Bertha, putting his little fortune at her disposal, waxing enthusiastic with her enthusiasm, and postponing the day when he should hint to her his love.

The river-side was a scene of great liveliness some hours later on. It happened to be the day of the arrival of Captain Jansen's fishing-boats—the boats that, according to Bertha's scheme, were gradually to become the property of the men as they paid the captain back from the profits of their fishing.

The crowd that swarmed down to the beach was made up of the inhabitants of the foreshore.

A pilot-boat, with Captain Jansen and Bertha in it, was to set off

across the bar the moment the little fleet came in view at Dutton Head. Every flag was flying on the masts of the timber brigs and the coal ships, for Jansen's name was one to conjure with among the coasting captains. Bertha and he had not yet taken their place in the pilot's boat, when the gate in the sea-wall of Boulderstone Castle opened, and a party of half a dozen sauntered down toward the opposite side of the river. Mr. Frazer led Lady Dutton, Mr. Brock accompanied Miss Frazer, who was dressed in blue yachting costume, and Sir Neil was last, with a little man in blue uniform and gold buttons.

The projector's yacht had come round from the Clyde, and lay in the center of the river—a perfect gem of marine workmanship—and for the first time it was to make the circuit of Boulderstone Bay.

"Well, I am so glad to see that the people of the town recognize their duties," said Lady Dutton, as she stepped warily across the stones. She was looking at the imposing array of streaming flags which she took to be some homage to the party. Mr. Frazer only knew that morning of the demonstration and its significance, but he said nothing.

"Dear me, the whole town has turned out to see us." Saying this, Caroline suddenly deserted Mr. Brock's side, in order that she might present herself to the multitude on the baronet's arm. "Well, Carry, what do you think now of Boulderstone's enthusiasm?" asked Sir Neil, as the gay colors struck him. "I had no idea the trial-trip would elicit all that."

As they took their seats in the small boat and rowed out to the yacht in the middle of the stream the air was rent with shouts. From the Brae-head to the water-edge the groups of fisher-folks sustained the applause.

Lady Dutton stood on the deck of the yacht, bowing most affably. Caroline waved her handkerchief, and Sir Neil raised his hat. As the screw moved and the yacht glided out, the voices were more noisy than ever.

"What an enthusiastic crowd! I only hope my first constituency may have a tenth of the fervor," said Sir Neil to Mr. Frazer. But the latter preserved a grim silence. He saw a green-painted yawl, with its mast up and its brown sail set, and he knew that the two figures in the stern were Bertha and Captain Jansen. Neck and neck the boat ran for some time with the yacht, the noise of the voices growing fainter behind them, and still the occupants of the yacht waved and bowed to the multitude.

"Who is that person?" asked Lady Dutton, as she perceived a white hand held up from the stern of the yawl.

"She thinks it's for her the applause is," said Caroline; and Mr. Brock would have laughed loudly but for the first heavings of the sea, which told him that before long he would be humiliated.

"Who is she?" repeated her ladyship with more emphasis, as the yawl cleared the bar at a galloping pace within a few yards of the yacht, while Sir Neil shouted across,

"Are you racing us, Miss St. Clair?"

"We've no chance against steam," was the captain's answer, as Bertha bowed to Sir Neil.

"She's a very giddy young woman, Lady Dutton, and the sooner

that man marries her the better it will be for her," said Mr. Frazer, confidentially.

"Oh dear!" and Lady Dutton fixed her *pince-nez*, and looked with unfeigned alarm at the white crests of the breakers which rushed ashore on each side of the bar.

The salmon-fishers were in their cobs as the yacht and the yawl swept past. They rose and waved their sou'-westers, for they had seen the fleet at Dutton Head, toward which Captain Jansen now turned the bow of his boat.

"How did you come to know that—that person, Neil?" his mother asked when they were well free of the river, and had left the fringe of white waves behind.

"She's the charity-school-mistress I've talked to you about. I thought she was an elderly, forbidding woman. But she's a mere girl, as you have seen."

"Leave her alone for being the most cunning woman in the district," said Mr. Frazer; "she's going to give me a deal of trouble. I am afraid she's bad out and out."

Sir Neil never talked harm of any one without strong conviction of their worthlessness.

It happened that Bertha had impressed him very strongly with a sense of her truthfulness and earnestness, perhaps with her beauty.

"You are prejudiced," he said, sharply, turning on his heel, and Mr. Frazer's lip fell with an expression of contempt. "The puppy, after all I have done and am doing for him!"

The yacht had now taken one direction and the yawl another; but there was an undertone of discord on board the handsome little steamboat which made itself felt during the whole trip. Yet there was much to have made it very pleasant. Boulderstone Bay was wide, breezy and fresh. There was just enough of rolling in the waves to make any one enthusiastic for sailing feel the pleasure of being out.

They made direct for Sandstone; but whether it was that Sir Neil spoke too kindly to some lobster-fishers who were pulling in their boxes beneath the cliff at the light-house, or that the spectacle of the incoming boats disagreed with Mr. Frazer, there was a general feeling of ill-temper. It was not improved when Sir Neil was told by the captain that he believed the small fleet was a "venture" of Jansen's.

"The bunting, after all, was not for us, Lady Dutton. We, in our self-conceit, went off with the applause. It was the old captain and the girl in the stern of the boat to whom it was addressed."

"The more shame to her," replied her ladyship. "It is too absurd that a demonstration of that sort should have been got up for any such purpose."

"My lady, a crowd would gather if there was an old hat in the river," snapped Mr. Frazer.

They were just finishing luncheon, during the course of which Mr. Brock privately discovered that Sir Neil Dutton was "a damned conceited fellow," when a noise of voices was heard on deck.

"Something has happened!" exclaimed Lady Dutton; "I hope we are in no danger!"

The noise continued; feet tramped overhead; there was a confu-

sion of orders, mingled with swearing and the beating of spars on the taffrail.

"See that, there is no danger," said Lady Dutton, while Caroline, pale with terror, looked ready to cry. The steward, coming in at that moment, announced,

"It's nothing, sir, but a shore boat that came foul of us. All the crew are on board."

"Do you call that nothing?" said Sir Neil, nimbly stepping out of the saloon and ascending on deck.

When he returned, Bertha St. Clair was on his arm, pale, but perfectly courageous.

Lady Dutton and Caroline rose together.

"Come with me, Carry dear, I foresee a scene."

"Let me not disturb your ladyship," said Bertha, in a low voice, seeing how unwelcome she was. "Sir, I have quite recovered myself."

"My dear Miss St. Clair, you shall sit down. Steward, bring Captain Jansen. Some terrible blunder has been committed. The yacht has been brought right athwart the fleet of boats; and had this lady not been as quick-witted as she is brave, there would have been lives lost."

Bertha, who was wet to the knees, sat down, Mr. Frazer frowning on her, until Captain Jansen came in saying, "He's no sea-faring man that commands this yacht."

Mr. Frazer and the Laird of Lobster Keep went upstairs.

"I hope to goodness," said Sir Neil, roused from his usual level of calmness, "that you have received no injury, Miss St. Clair?"

Bertha was struggling against a strong tendency to faint.

"It is the air of the cabin," she murmured, feebly; "let me go on deck."

They led her on deck. The breeze restored her; and as the yacht steamed into the river the assembled crowd saw with delight that the lord of the manor was standing between Bertha and the captain.

This time, as he raised his hat, he felt that he was entitled to at least the reflected honor which was being bestowed on his two friends.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FRIENDSHIP.

THE more Sir Neil Dutton thought of the episode of the yacht coming in contact with the yawl in the bay, the more he thought of Bertha St. Clair as a heroic young creature. The behavior of his own party to her he considered mean in the extreme. By her own agility she had clambered out of a sinking boat and assisted the others, and not a word of terror had escaped from her lips. Through sheer force of courage she had repressed the overpowering feeling of faintness; and when, snatched from the grave, as it were, she was introduced to his people in the cabin of the yacht, they turned their backs on her. Why, had she been the most forbidding wretch on the foreshore of Boulderstone he could not have behaved to her with such cruelty. It was incomprehensible. He was so angry that he

never alluded to the event all the evening. And no other person seemed to think it worth while alluding to, though Mr. Frazer, with brows knit, sat devising a plan of annihilation for the captain and Bertha; while Caroline, at Lady Dutton's request, stumbled through Mendelssohn's "Lieder" for the benefit of her betrothed.

Sir Niel was much on the river during these early spring days. He had not used rod and line since he was a boy; but the economy of the river was as familiar to him as the inside of the town to Mr. Frazer.

Beyond Juniper Bank the Boulder flowed for a quarter of a mile through a deep pool, which, under old salmon regulations, was inclosed within a cruive at one end and a fall at the other. The margin of the pool was of shingle, and the salmon were running up in shoals from the sea. The wintery water had subsided weeks before, and with it the kelts which had been at the spawning beds had run back to the bay for the rich feeding it would give them.

Already the smolts were beginning to run, and a great cormorant dived, reappeared, and dived, feeding himself with much voracity in the center of the stream.

"That fellow has been there, sir, for a week, an' I'se warran' he's had his fill o' smoots by this time. I was some thinkin' to shute him the day, aifter ye fished the pool."

So said the gillie, but Sir Neil was in no humor to have the bird's life taken.

"There's luck in him, Sandy. I've got a grilse in his trail each time I've fished."

"Oo ay, sir; but ye might get a saumon if he was ta'en aff the watter. We had Lord Addersdale on the pool ance, an' he took seeven saumon rinnin' juist whaur ye're staunin' enoo."

"Yes; but Lord Addersdale is the crack angler of the North, Sandy."

"If ye could manage to hit the watter twa three yards abune that stane ahint the fa', I wad maist guarantee ye a fish." Sandy lowered his voice to a whisper now that his master was casting.

"Thanks, Sandy. You may go up the stream now and see what you think about that cormorant. I shall speak if you stay here, and the salmon don't like it."

"Ou, they're skeely craturs, saumon. Whan they hear a man's vice they ken there's cheetin' gaun on," and Sandy moved away slowly with his gaff in his hand.

But Sir Neil fished the pool in vain that afternoon. Over and over again a head or a tail showed itself at his fly, but his hand had lost its cunning. One after another the pricked fish rushed up the waters, and the baronet had no sport.

"Just take these things, will you?" said Sir Neil, after a few hours' beating about the pool, "and tell them to have my horse at the second milestone by seven o'clock."

"Aweel, sir," replied Sandy, striding away.

Sir Neil strolled leisurely down the shingle, enjoying the solitude.

It was the kind of spring evening in which the pulse of universal life can be felt beating through everything.

The banks were shaggy with heath and broom and whins, and the linnets were hovering over them with straws in their mouths.

And where the bank became a wall of clay, wrens and sand-martins were flying out and in, having already arranged for their spring housekeeping.

The first bees of the year—great, yellow drones—were irresolutely passing from flowerless shrub to shrub. The valley had not a sound in it save of the steady, crashing fall, the melodious muttering of the birds, and from the distance the meaning cry of a heifer in the fields.

All Boulderstone was on the other side of the slope through which the river flowed; but Sir Neil, as he sauntered down, felt that he might have left human beings a whole zone behind him.

“She must be rather happy living in a sweet place like that,” he said to himself, looking up to Juniper Bank. And he climbed the slope that overlooked Bertha’s garden.

The impulse under which Sir Neil was acting could hardly be said to be one of mere kindness and anxiety to know how Bertha had fared after the accident in the bay. He could not have explained it to himself. Ever since he had talked to Bertha outside his own garden wall he had wished to know more of her. The nearer the months drew to his own marriage with Caroline Frazer, the more he felt that life was not shaping itself for the future of happiness to which he had been looking forward. His winter in America had slackened the reins of affection. The more he came in contact with Caroline he became aware that beneath the pleasant exterior there was a hard commonplaceness of character. Even her habits, he was obliged to admit to himself, were not those he could have hoped for in a simple Scottish maiden. If he explained her obvious enjoyment of good things to himself, he said it was probably the change of circumstances in early life that had brought it about. For observation had told him that people suddenly lifted from mean conditions to affluence are apt to wallow in material pleasures. Not that he used such an expression to himself in considering the character of the girl to whom he was engaged; far from it. He was a loyal young man; but the first glamour of love being over, he could not choose but see what fell under his own notice. And one thing it pained him acutely to see was that Caroline sometimes looked overpowered, as if she had drugged herself; the drugs he suspected to be alcoholic.

Then his relationship with her father had begun to be a little irksome. No doubt it was a great thing to have the Boulderstone property upon a new footing, which would allow him and his mother to take their place in the world again. But there was an undertone of mastership in the manner of Mr. Frazer that was new to Sir Neil Dutton. What Mr. Frazer planned he executed, without deviation to the right hand or the left. He submitted no suggestion, and he would take none. The property might have been his own, so absolutely did he deal with it. And he did not take Sir Neil into his confidence so deeply as to tell him how far his plans were to extend.

Then above and beyond his own affairs the young man knew not how to range himself. Asking himself what he was, he could find no answer. He could not tell whether he were seriously a politician, though daily communications informed him that in the borough of

Westlands men were discussing him as a Liberal who was one day to contest the seat. He had never assured himself as to what he meant to live for; though that he must live for something beyond mere self an overmastering impulse told him. He had dabbled in art, he had looked into the surface tendencies of science, he had played battledoor and shuttlecock with the subject and object of philosophy, he had even raced a little and gained and lost; yet none of these things satisfied him. If love were to be a failure too, what remained?

He walked over Bertha's terrace with a confused sense of being a waif on the face of the earth. Standing for a moment on the edge of her garden and looking down into the valley, he wished he had been born without title, without estates, so that he might pursue the by-ways of life unnoticed and unknown.

Bertha was writing at her open window as he went across to her door.

"I just stepped up to the bank, to see how you were, Miss St. Clair."

Bertha came out and invited him into her cottage.

"You are very kind, sir; I took no harm from the accident at all. The worst was over before I landed from the yacht."

But she was not looking as he had seen her the first time at the ferry. There was a sweet repose in her that seemed now to be dashed with anxiety. He attributed it to the event in the bay.

"You really had a very narrow escape from being drowned."

"I don't think I should have been drowned in any case."

"Don't you know that the boat went down in a couple of minutes' time? But perhaps you believe in special providence?"

"I don't know; but I can swim," said Bertha.

"And so you would have been your own special providence?" And Sir Neil, looking at her with respectful admiration, then went on to say, "I told you once I should have to come to you for ideas."

Bertha smiled pleasantly, and they sat down on the garden seat. Her presence seemed to invite confidence, and he broke out abruptly,

"I'm going into Parliament, don't you know, and yet as I came up the path to your house I couldn't help feeling that there wasn't anything in life to do."

"I find a great deal to do, and I thought Parliament was the place where the greatest and noblest work could be done."

"Well, I shall have to make speeches and that sort of things before getting in, but my experience of life is that parliaments do very little for people. You get along because you believe in your work. But what do you consider your work, Miss St. Clair—the charity-school or—or things in general? From what I can hear of the foreshore, you seem to be a great deal mixed up with business. Shall I tell you what my banker said of you the other day—the provost, that is? Well, he said you were a—he's not very flattering, the old provost—'Toon Coouncil,' a committee of public works, a chamberlain, and a something else, all in one; in fact, I suppose he means that you are a politician."

"No, I know nothing of politics; but living here by myself I have come to learn one may do some good by a little attention to one's neighbors. One day long ago I woke up to find that I was too comfortable. On the foreshore there was nakedness and hunger.

It came to the cottage on tiny legs, and showed itself in pale, dying faces. Well, I was not wealthy, but I had abundance, and something over. They gave me the charity-school. I got to know the story of every needy life from the children. I saw them in their homes; and by and by, having taught myself what served for teaching boys who were returning from sea to the boats instead of going back to sea as mates, I was able to help some families better even than by giving them money; for the mates help the old people. And now, with Captain Jansen's assistance, the most badly off may live independent lives, for they all have boats. Even healthier and brighter lives they may lead, because I have been able to teach many of them the value of the sea-breeze they shut out of their houses, and to lighten up their little rooms with flowers. That is my work; but it is not politics."

"He's a good fellow, Jansen, I should say. A relative, isn't he?"

"No; he is only an old friend of my father's and now my best friend in Boulderstone."

Then there was silence for some minutes. Sir Neil should have gone away. He had made his inquiries and given his sympathy. Yet he lingered.

"To think of you going into these tinkers' caves, too. I met a party of them. They are, without exception, the most atrocious-looking scoundrels I ever saw."

"Nobody does anything for them," said Bertha. "They have been driven away from the town. How could you think they would look or behave like other people?"

"Well, I suppose that is the case; only I don't see what is to be done for them—indeed I don't. They won't fit into any scheme I can think of. Christianity can't, or at any rate doesn't do it; politics won't. I see nothing for it but isolation and police regulations, and that sort of thing."

"Politics makes people hard," said Bertha, quietly.

"What would you substitute? There are the churches in Boulderstone. Do you think the churches can do anything?"

Bertha had gone to church as a matter of habit all her life; it was a routine of sitting and rising, singing and musing, that came round once a week. She had never known it to do anything for poor people except to terrify some of them when they were dying.

"Mr. Petersen is a kind, good man," she said, the Church embodying itself to her mind in his person at that moment, "but the Church in Boulderstone is asleep. I can not see that the story of Galilee has any connection with what they do and say out of their places of worship. They meet at the old cross each Sunday and take away each other's characters."

"You are as much at sea as I am, Miss St. Clair, only you fall back upon work and human kindness, while I am still debating what work to fall to. And I haven't a margin of tenderness for everybody like you."

"I am not tender to everybody," said Bertha, remembering with a flush the kind of emotion Mr. Frazer's words had roused in her.

"I should like to send my man up with a salmon some of these days," said Sir Neil, rising. "I'm a good deal about the river, you know. I think you can tell me more about my people than

any one. Then I should like to compare ideas again with you on some things."

"But it is of no use, Sir Neil. Your manager has begun already to do many things at the foreshore you might have prevented. He is pulling down houses already, and the people are thrown out in the cold."

"Ah, that is only to shift the slate-workers further round the shore nearer their work. That will turn out all right, I know."

"But he has been to Sandstone, and the roofs are being taken off some of the houses—Sandstone, where the pilots have been for hundreds of years. They are as old as you, sir—as old in blood and in habitation."

"There is an emigration scheme to meet that, don't you know?"

"And do you suppose the Sandstone pilots can be turned away to the south of the world at the first bidding? Do you think they have no love for the old cliffs their forefathers have clung to? Is the voice of the sea to be taken out of their hearts at one wrench because it suits your man of business to send them away? The pilots will stand by their cliffs, sir, if they should starve."

"And don't you think it a little irrational?"

"Do you love Boulderstone, Sir Neil Dutton? then ask yourself if the love of it is any more rational than theirs?"

"I hope to convince you that our schemes are better than you suppose them," said the baronet, holding out his hand, though some of the schemes he had heard of for the first time from Bertha's lips.

"At any rate, you will let me have the privilege of being counted among your friends whatever occurs."

And they shook hands and bade each other a quiet "good-night."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SCANDAL.

ONE morning Oscar, Captain Jansen's retriever, and Fidget, Bertha's terrier, met on the bridge of the Boulder. Whether they had made an appointment to meet there it is not easy to determine; but in the cheerful sunshine of that particular day the retriever looked by no means surprised when he saw his little slate-blue friend trotting toward him from the road that led from Juniper Bank. Properly speaking, the retriever was the dog who knew the town, as he belonged to it; but the terrier at once took charge of his large friend, and after mutual signs of welcome had been interchanged, they set off at a smart trot, Fidget, with his ears half erect, turning his head occasionally from side to side to feel sure that his leadership was being respected. First of all, Fidget led Oscar down by the side of a wall to the river and indicated to his companion that there was something to be done at that spot. Nor had Oscar long to wait. Two plump brown rats, with tails like the thong of a whip, made their appearance on the shore; the small dog gave a growl of satisfaction, and the large one rushed forward, made two deep gur-gurs and a crunch, and the rats lay with their legs in the air.

Fidget then stepped forward with a slightly pompous mien, took one of the warm rats between his teeth, and led the way back to the bridge.

Two collies which were going on the bridge at the heels of their master turned round and looked at him with admiration, though Fidget was much inclined to drop the rat, run after the sheep-dogs, and bark at them as he had seen them bark behind a sea of bleating wool.

Advancing from the bridge, the pair, in the same order, went into town, where they passed Swanson's inn. Fidget gripped his rat, and trotted by a couple of speckled carriage-dogs with a bragging gait, a growl escaping from between his preoccupied teeth as the two aristocrats, shivering, disappeared behind the front door.

A large Newfoundland dog, however, sitting in the shade, opened one eye and looked satirically at the dead rat in the terrier's teeth, knowing full well that his old friend Oscar had been the death of it. Fidget, accordingly, with the sense of dignity which was given him to compensate for a lack of size, dropped the rat, leaped at the reposeful face of the sarcastic Newfoundland and fastened his teeth in a black nostril. Then, retiring behind Oscar, he added a few interjunctory barks to the deep thunder of two masterful fighters.

The Newfoundland and retriever tore each other, tugged each other over and over on the hotel pavement, shed blood, and would have shed more, had not a window opened from above and the dregs of a coffee-pot come suddenly upon them, warm and surprising. Then Fidget again resumed the command, and his bleeding comrade trotted after him.

"Captain Jansen's dog, wi' the school-mistress's terrier settin' his back up," roared Boots in the mean time through the corridor of the inn.

And the commercial travelers in the parlor, who had not yet gone for the day with their samples, winked at each other; while Swanson, whose wife was trying to make him feel himself *de trop* in the room, made the observation that the captain and the school-mistress were "gettin' thicker and thicker."

By the time Fidget reached the center of Boulderstone he dropped his rat finally; he saw that other dogs gave him no credit for it. So, with a little ill-nature, as became a dog who allowed his mistress to associate with another dog's master, he made direct for a butcher's door.

It happened that Mr. Moore, "the flesher," had got exposed at his door a variety of carcasses of all shapes and sizes, and that one square of red ribs appealed to the eye of Fidget with overpowering force. There were four ribs; two apiece; and there was no time for reflecting deeply, as the butcher had seen their approach.

For a moment the image of his mistress must certainly have occurred to Fidget, for he sneaked unmistakably as he approached the ribs. So, indeed, did Oscar, who timidly advanced in the rear of the terrier.

It was all over, however, in less than a minute. Fidget seized the ruddy piece of flesh; Oscar followed with a joint, and made off through the square with a tumbling precipitancy which gave the butcher time to hurl the handle of an ax with alarming precision.

"It's the damned skipper and the school-mistress," swore Mr. Moore, as he saw his beef disappear up a street near the corner of the Town Hall.

"It's that damned skipper and the school-mistress," he repeated, to the iron-monger, who came out with apron and spectacles to better understand the appearance of the projectile, and he vouchsafed no further reply after he had picked up the handle which lay at his door.

Meanwhile the dogs got beyond the town precincts as rapidly as they could, a small retinue of hungry acquaintances following well behind them, and sitting down in the shadow of a dike, they ate the beef with no present pang of conscience. Neither of them were ungenerous dogs, but they allowed a circle of sorrowful faces to gather within a few feet of them and went on gnawing as if they were themselves the only dogs in Christendom.

Boulderstone was not liberally supplied with water. With the exception of one or two gardens which had wells of their own, there was but one general well in the place. The "Wall," as it was called, was as much an institution as the Braes-head, the Bank, the Cross, or the Market. The deep spring was covered over by a large round tower, adorned with an iron handle and a formidable spout; and it was no uncommon thing for two or three dozen women, with "kits" and hoops, to find their way there.

Many public questions were settled at the Well; it was the local exchange for gossip, and no domestic servant of any standing in the town allowed any engagement or task to stand between her and her visit to the well at the hour she had proposed to herself.

The evening of the day on which Oscar and Fidget had taken away their own characters in the public market, there was a respectable number of females gathered at the rendezvous.

They ranged themselves in three groups, each female standing inside her hoop, waiting, most of them arms akimbo, with looks of patient resignation. The inner group had laid aside its hoops, and was standing in an attitude of readiness, kits in hand, to take the place of the promiscuous crowd nearest the spout, which, with various screams and exclamations, was handing up its pails to be filled.

It sometimes happened that a tall carter stopped his horse and gallantly strode down to the pump-handle, and left an enduring impression of his politeness on the hearts of the assembled group.

That was not the case this evening. A stout woman, with a head of exceedingly red hair and a bold, clean face, worked the handle. She was a perfect Amazon in strength, and with the knuckles of her right hand pressed to her ribs, she moved the ponderous rod of iron as freely with her left as if it had neither weight nor friction.

"Weel, she's an obleegin' cratur' that, too," said one of the outermost group, arms akimbo, hoping that Madge Knockan's zeal for work would last till she got her supply of water.

"She's no takin' exercise for naething," replied a hard-featured woman who had not come for gossip, and whom disappointment at the size of the crowd had rendered a little bitter in view of the time it would take her to reach the spout.

"Hoots, woman, Madge's a decent woman, noo! That taupie

wha drives the cairt to the steamer, ain faither tae her last bairn, 's gaun tae mairry her. He's but auchteen, an' Madge's mair than thretty, but she's threethened him that muckle he'll hae to mairry her."

"Puir cratur! Madge's taen up wi' seven or aucht afore him. Betsy Cormack tell't me she saw the Laird o' Lobster Keep gang sneakin' doon her lane the ither nicht. What wad he be wantin', I wonner? The cairter maun be daft tae tak' a woman wi' sax bairns tae ither men."

"Madge wad murder him, woman, if he didna."

"Says I to her, says I, I've been wi' the county families a' my life, an' nane o' them daur tae speak tae me in that way." The speaker was another of the outer ring, a red-armed, full-chested wench, with dark eyes and a determined manner, who addressed a small, pale girl.

"Michty, kimmer, that's naething. Ye get yer meat an' yer drink frae the minister's wife. At oor hoose a' thing's locked up, frae the meal-barrel tae the tea-caddy. There's no' a pint o' a preen's worth ootside a press door."

"Puir thing, ye're rale stairvt-like," said a matron, overhearing the conversation.

"If it was me I wad steal," put in another girl, her advice changing into indignation as a sunburnt neighbor suggested she saw "that brotch on ane o' the provost's sisters twa Sabbaths ago," the ornament in question being at the adviser's throat.

"Me, Madge, me, me," shouted three voices from the innermost group, while three pairs of red arms held up pails at the same time.

"Ane at a time, or I'll stan' doon," cried Madge, in a strong masculine voice, indisposed to become judge as to the claims of the rivals.

Meanwhile, in the middle of the group a great chattering of tongues was going on, which showed that some common object of interest was being discussed. Loud above all the sound of discussion were such vigorous fragments of speech as "Ye limmer!" "Ye double-faced hizzy!" "Ye lee-er!"

When the noise had somewhat subsided, and the argument had fallen back to two speakers, it was apparent that Captain Jansen and Bertha St. Clair were the subjects of it.

"Ou, but ye're maybe chief wi' him yersel; ye'll maybe mairry him," said a stout-bodied, sharp-featured woman to a little pugnacious-looking creature at her side.

"If I was tae tell Jean Scott what ye said enoo, it's no muckle ye wad ever get frae Captain Jansen's gairden or table."

"Tell her, ye limmer, an' ye'll fin' that Jean Scott kens as weel as ither fowk that Captain Jansen's daft aboot the mistress."

"Aweel, bigger men than the captain micht be daft aboot her. Wha's half sae winsom' as she is? Wha has her een, or her smile, or her walk—wull ye tell me? Wha has her kind heart? Whatna ither lassie i' Bootherstane wad hae gane oot an' in whan the fivver an' sma' poks was on the foreshore? She's no' nane o' yer brazen sort that pits a track in yer haun' and diehts her kids aifter it's ower. Na; it's rhubarb an' aipples an' eggs that she'll gie ye, wi' a kind word o' her ain."

"I never got any o' her aipples an' eggs," said the other speaker, rather overcome by the torrent of her neighbor's eloquence. "But she wadna be the first that's been winsome, an' had een an' a smile an' a', but that was got the better o'. An' the cap'n's a rale brisk, likely fallow. He might be as young as Madge's man, tae look at him. Me, Madge, me," she continued, pushing her way to a place at the spout.

"I'll see ye—" exclaimed the mother of seven children, striding down and into her hoop.

Madge had no character; she gloried in having none; but she had overheard enough to know that two people who had characters were in the mouth of a woman she hated.

"Madge's gettin' prood," said the gossip, loudly, ascending to the handle, "because she's gettin' a man, puir deevil. She'll kame his heed for him."

Madge made no response; but as the gossip went round the corner from the Wall, the crowd of women were aware that a kittful of water met her in the face; and those of them who did not hurry away in alarm laughed to see the poor wretch drenched. Their jokes were a little rough at the Boulderstone Well.

In such fashion did Fidget and Oscar, passing together at the outset of the conversation, unwittingly steal away the fair names of their mistress and master.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SAILING THE "PETREL."

THE steamer from the "Sooth" was lying at the harbor of Sandstone when Captain Jansen stepped along the quay one day. In the roadstead, between the light-house and the harbor, there was a number of vessels of various sorts and sizes, and boats were constantly passing between the village stairs and the bay.

As the captain strolled down to the point, clearing numerous ropes with his legs, a burly figure rose from a "paul," on which he had been sitting, and jerked over his shoulder a half-smoked cigar. He was a hairy man, and might have been a poodle, a terrier, or a small lion, without much change on the part of Nature.

"Right glad I am to see you, Jansen; I thought I was going to fill up this time without a shake of your hand."

Jansen shook his friend's brown hand and took a fat cigar out of it. "I can't say, John Jansen, that you're the man you were six months ago. What the devil, man—is it such dry weather lyin' ashore?" and the man-terrier made a counterfeit tumbler of his fist, and quaffed it in a succession of rapid pantomimic gestures.

"You're dry, are you, George?" asked Jansen, with a faint smile. "You can have the window o' the inn up there if you like it, and anything you want to order."

"Right you are, Jansen; there's some hope for you yet; we'll turn in an' have a horn o' brandy. Come along, harbor-master. A horn apiece at John's expense—rich John Jansen, a shore-going gentleman of high degree."

The speaker was the captain of the steamboat "Petrel." He

was an old friend of Captain Jansen; they had been shipmates in earlier life, and had never quite lost sight of each other; they saw each other often now that Captain Brochie had become master of the steamer on the station.

They were speedily established at the inn window, from which Brochie could see down into his ship, where the cook was staggering from the galley with steaming pots, and a couple of stokers leaned over the bulwarks with a line in their hands trying to coax some fresh fish aboard.

The harbor-master, an old seaman, who had not been afloat since his youth, took his place beside them a little nervously—anxious, as it were, to have his brandy, but not unaware that his wife's kitchen window overlooked the quay, and knowing that, if his footsteps had been traced, he might be summarily recalled to his duty. Captain Brochie, to tell the truth, was himself a little nervous, for he had a confidence to bestow, and he was not sure how much "chaff" he might have to stand. So he took the initiative.

"Jansen," he began, withdrawing his glass from the thicket of hair above which his eyes gleamed, "you must be up to the stern-posts in money."

His friend twirled his glass without speaking.

"You look so devilish miserable, you must have more of it on your mind than's good for ye."

"I have enough, Brochie, to last my time."

"Well, that'll be but a short time, friend, if you don't improve in your appearance."

"Off with it. Another horn here, missis."

And the stoups were deposited forthwith.

"Ay, Jansen, it's wonderful to think that you should be a shore-going gentleman and me still afloat—me that was in steam when you were tackin' the North Sea in a pot-lid."

"Thank ye, George. The pot-lid would have given a clean pair of heels to the 'Petrel,' even wi' you on the bridge. She would that. I'm sometimes sorry I ever parted with her. I'll waken up at night, believe me, and put the lamp in my window, and go down my garden, and stay through a whole watch."

"Ye will, will ye?" asked Brochie, excitedly. "Then you're my man, John; there's a wench waitin' for me at the pier o' Leith, an' the next time bar the next that I come back here I'll be a married man."

The harbor-master looked at the door again with a marked expression of timidity.

"Is it true, George Brochie?"

"A God's truth," said the captain, devoutly.

"How did you ever come to do it, George? You're as old as I am. Is she young or old?"

"She's eighteen."

Jansen reached his arm over the table and shook his friend's hand a little grimly.

"Your courage beats Bannagher," remarked the harbor-master, in a subdued tone. "But, George, wasn't there something about a weddin' at Gottenburg?"

"Lies—damned lies," replied Brotchie, gruffly. "She's the first I ever cast eyes on with that intention."

"Well, George, you ken best," asserted the harbor-master; "but you'll find thorns in the pillow, or I'm mistaken."

"You're a Job's comforter, too. Do you suppose because you've got a thistle at your lug I must have the same? Nothing o' the sort. Betsy's young; she's good-tempered, leastways when she's not roused; she's got a good pair o' red cheeks, and she thinks George Brotchie the only true man she ever set eyes on. Many's the time her mother—I lodge with her mother—has threatened me with the sheriff's officer when Betsy came between me and my debts. That's Betsy!" and he deposited a *carte-de-visite* in which the photographer had put in all the color of the cheeks, the deep blue of the dress, and the bright scarlet and yellow of the necktie. Betsy had a blazing face, an evil look in her eye, and was forty at least.

"She'll be a girl of character," observed Captain Jansen, at a loss what to say by way of criticism.

"I would like to hear any one say a word against her character," said Brotchie. "She has fifty of them, if she has one, in her trunk. Betsy has plenty of characters."

"I would think that," was the dry comment of the harbor-master, having examined the *carte*. And George was aware, from the mute testimony of his friend, that the first impression of his future spouse was not one to inspire affectionate enthusiasm.

"Well, Jansen, it's me that's marryin' her, not you; so don't look so mighty melancholy. But Betsy will have a honey-moon, and have it on shore, and you can do me a favor. Will you sail the 'Petrel' for two or three trips? The directors allow me to appoint my own substitute."

Jansen stood up at the window, and watched the "Petrel" as she floated at the side of the quay. The cargo was nearly all aboard; the brasses shone in the sun; he saw the door of the master's lookout open, and his pipe on the table: he felt as if he were fronting a great gust of east wind, and as if the spray were on his face.

"Sail the 'Petrel'? I will, George. I will, gladly, for I'm not so well as when I was at sea."

"It's not this, John?" holding up the spirit stoup.

"No, no; I've drunk more since we sat down than I've drunk for weeks. I never was a drinker. Heigh-ho!"

"Out with her, John; out with her. I've been candid to you; you be candid to me. I've shown you my Betsy; show me your Jenny or Kitty or Molly, or whatever her name may be. Heigh-ho! say you? And it's not the stoup that's done it. Of course it's a woman. If you carry her about with you as I do my wife-to-be, you're in honor bound to lay her face on that table."

And Captain Brotchie made the stoups dance with the weight of his fist on the table.

Jansen thought of Bertha, as indeed he was now always doing, but remained mute.

"Harbor-master," continued Brotchie, "you know the wenches on this coast. You know friend Jansen's. He's a sly one, too. Out with it."

"'Deed, Captain Jansen, they say there's a something goin' on

between yourself and the bonny school-mistress, Miss St. Clair, at Juniper Bank. A fine strappin' lass, Captain Brochie; not so full built and highly painted as the craft you have in tow, but strap-pin' and fair, with an eye like the polar star."

"Not another word about Miss St. Clair," said Jansen, firmly. "She's as high above me as the polar star is above the 'Petrel' when she's making the headland in the midnight. I'm an old man; she's but a girl."

Captain Jansen had overstated his case. He was almost passionate in his denial of love.

"Ay, John, you're bitten sore," said his hirsute friend, sympathetically. "But you'll run the 'Petrel' for me?"

"I will that with pleasure."

And Jansen, going out, stepped down into a pilot-boat which was setting its sail for the river-mouth. He could not leave without bidding farewell at Juniper Bank, but still he was unable to tell Bertha of the love he bore her.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AT THE CROSS.

SEVERAL times in the course of the year the town of Boulderstone had a visitation of saints.

The saints were known as "the men." How they came to be called by that name it is hard to say, for, meeting one of them on the edge of a moor, as he trudged in to the county town from the hills on the border of the county, it would not have struck an observer that manliness was his distinguishing feature.

The "man" was arrayed in a cloak of blue stuff which enveloped him from his chin to his heels. It fastened at his throat with a strong brass chain; and if one hand were free, it carried a red handkerchief in which a Bible jostled a snuff-box. The "man" had frequently no hat on his head, and his hair was then seen to be cropped close to his skull.

His pace along the dusty highway was a crawl; and when there was the sound of wheels or the clatter of hoofs, he would bring himself to his knees at the roadside in an attitude of prayer.

Like the Puritans of old, he prayed with a strong nasal accent; if he used the English language at all, it was with a marked Gaelic intonation.

When he reached town from his hovel among the hills many doors were thrown open to him. His gift of prayer was courted by many who feared his power of cursing.

The "man," or "crony," as he was sometimes called, when he arrived at the recognized position of being a saint, had the reputation of moving heaven by his appeals, either in the direction of beatitude or misfortune.

But he held his position in virtue of a more definite attribute than that.

The "man" was opposed to the minister, whose training at the secular colleges he regarded as an insult to the "grace of God" under which he himself preached.

To be able to tell others of the "grace of God" there must, in the "man's" opinion, be no other inspiration than that received from Bible knowledge and personal piety. It happened, therefore, that at the Sacrament season, in the fields or church-yards outside the various places of worship of Boulderstone, there might be heard five or six different voices, Celtic and nasal, telling surrounding crowds that preaching was foolishness—all preaching, except that of the "men."

And some of them, with strong imaginations and no lack of words, were able to rouse the people who surrounded them to a keen sense of a hell where there was no joy and an eternity where there was no hope. It was due to their power that all the placed pastors of Boulderstone should treat them with a certain amount of respect, even though they received abuse at their hands.

The only class which handled them suspiciously was the lawyers. When a "man" was put up in the witness-box of the Sheriff Court the judge invariably kept an eye on the arm that was raised for taking the oath. It was known to be a tradition among them that an oath taken with the left hand up had no sanction, and the piety of a "man" did not affect his imagination. He lied with fervor and sincerity whenever he had a mind to, and the quality of his conscience was such that he never looked back upon the lies with regret, unless it was to deplore their inutility for a given purpose.

Mr. Frazer early became aware of the use the "cronies" might be put to in connection with his numerous schemes in the country-side. He had at first thought the local pastors the best agents he could employ in recommending certain lines of duty to the people which would square with his own plans. But there was a little dirty work to do, and though his gold had been seen in the "plates" and "missionary boxes" of all the churches, he knew that what he proposed would not be undertaken by any of them. Nor was it necessary. He had already got a scandal afoot in connection with the school-mistress. He would now have her denounced at the church door by a "man."

It came about, therefore, that Donald M'Coul, a sun-tanned saint with a raucous voice, who had come into Boulderstone Sacrament for forty years, found himself the richer by a ten-pound note one Saturday evening. The whole thing was arranged with the utmost simplicity. Mr. Frazer had not even sent for Donald M'Coul.

He had been standing one afternoon at the door of the bank, conversing with his friend the provost, when a figure in an indigo mantle crept past.

"That's the holiest man in the country-side, sir," observed the provost; "his meat and drink is prayer. Folks have been known to travel forty miles on foot to get his blessing. That's Donald M'Coul the crony."

The provost had no great idea of the cronies; but he was aware that the soft spot in the nature of the reformer was theology, and those who professed it in any of its branches.

"Good-day to ye, provost," said Mr. Frazer, without waiting for further conversation; and before Donald M'Coul had reached the town bridge, where he had made up on him, he began,

"Well, Donald M'Coul," in a tone of mingled plaintiveness, kindness, and pomposity, as the old man halted above the first arch.

Donald surveyed him from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, and gave utterance to a little moan, as if they were fellow-sufferers from a common malady.

"This is a blessed day for the country," said Mr. Frazer, looking out on the sunlight which was blazing on the brown river and the fields.

"It's Gode that is to be thankit, then."

"It is that; it is that."

"Ay, but if ye havena the grace o' Gode, an' the knowledge o' His salvation through the redeemin' blood o' the Lamb you're nae better than the dirt on the road. No; not than the dirt on the road!" cried the crony, raising his voice to a sudden, shrill intonation, as if he were addressing a crowd.

"To be sure, to be sure. Without salvation, Mr. M'Coul, and the knowledge of the truth, we are poor creatures. I'm just on the road to the castle. I think I can say from the baronet that you would be welcome there."

"Ye'll be Mr. Frazer," said the crony, relaxing into soft vocables. "Ye have a blessed name, Mr. Frazer;" and the sentence was terminated by a long benediction in Gaelic.

"It has pleased God," replied Mr. Frazer, "to take away the language from me. I have not spoken it since my youth. Would you believe me, Mr. M'Coul, it has gone clean out of my memory."

"It's a peety, too. But your hert, Mr. Frazer, is as good as if ye knowed no ither—blessed be Gode, blessed be Gode."

"You'll be preaching in Boulderstone to-morrow?"

"I've preached at the Sacraments for forty years at the Cross, come Sawbath, an' I've been the means of savin' many lost souls. Oh, that the windows o' hevinn wad open an' pour forth the Speerit an' the Lamb on the minister o' this toon!"

"Yes, they would all be better to be wakened up, Mr. M'Coul. But there's others. There's a young woman at the charity-school; ye'll have heard of her. She's poisoning the minds of the young, and she's not clean in her morals. And she's a fair-tongued wench. They don't see through her."

"Ay, ay; an unregenerate, proud, forward girl. I've had words wi' her. The lust o' the flesh, and the pride o' the eye—a whited sepulcher. Oh, she's no better nor the dirt on the road!"

"You'll have many opportunities of exercising charity, Mr. M'Coul; and I would like you to take a few pounds and disburse it according to your judgment."

Mr. Frazer took out his pocket-book, and drew a ten-pound note from it, and the saint accepted it with a groan and a shake of his head.

"A word in season at the church door would be a service to the Lord, Mr. M'Coul. A word about the school-mistress."

"Ay, she's bad, and there's no cleanness in her. I'll warran' that."

And as the crony was not going to the castle, they shook hands and parted.

The Sunday following was a warm summer day. It was so warm

inside the parish church that Mr. Petersen's beadle had opened two of the windows; and while the big clergyman went through his service in his cool, emotionless manner, throwing out germs of metaphysics and blossoms of poetry among a heap of commonplaces to a congregation which either yawned or slept, a shrill voice outside addressed a crowd among the tombstones. It was Donald M'Coul, who stood upon a marble tablet sacred to the memory of a deceased naval captain, and who was telling his hearers of the Tartarean future that awaited most of them.

At the windows of the poorer houses which commanded the church-yard there were here and there flaxen-haired children looking out, a woman with a baby in her arms, or a fisherman in undress smoking.

The sunlight which shone upon the saint cast a halo about him, and in the pathway of the descending rays insects flashed hither and thither.

From time to time, as he raised his arm and shrieked the tidings of hell to a world predestined to its torture, he looked to the church door.

Mr. Petersen did not believe in extended services, so M'Coul had not long to wait until the drowsy worshipers came out. The service had been shorter than usual because of the heat and the personal annoyance the minister experienced by the sound of the aged speaker on the tombstone coming in through the window.

Bertha had been in her pew that day. She had not heard much of the service; her mind was full of little duties she had to discharge during the week. She had got so used to the even monotony of Mr. Petersen's style that even when he uttered one of his fine thoughts it struck her like an electric shock administered by some unknown force outside Mr. Petersen and outside herself. The girl walked down the worn steps of the church, and in her plain dark dress, with some simple spring flowers in her hat, she was a striking contrast to the wood-merchant's daughters, who, in all the glory of silk and lace, rustled out in front of her. She was a contrast to the blazing scarlet of the farmers' wives who had come in from the country, and the queenliness of her quiet attitude made itself felt among them; for no one spoke to her as she passed out. She stood at the old cross for a little, looking through the crowd. The warm, fresh air was delightful to her senses. To live on such a day was a good thing for any one with young blood in their veins.

As her eye caught the open windows where her poor friends were she thought of her dream and sighed. She did not know that they were pointing to her with blessings.

The preacher saw his opportunity.

"Ay, there's some that'll go to hell onyway whatever. There's no salvation for them, no grace o' Gode in them. They were born in sin and conceived in iniquity. They'll dee, an' like deid dowgs the Father of mercies will cast them oot to corruption forever."

Bertha looked at the bowed old man, and his keen black eyes were fixed on her. The vision of him in the gracious sunlight, where the insects were quivering, made the girl shudder.

"Just look at *her* noo, look at *her*, I tell ye, stan'in' there under that Papist's stane. Ye'll be thinkin' there's salvation for the like

o' her. An' she thinks it hersel', in her pridefulness an' vanity. Salvation—for—her," screeched the preacher, straightening his figure as much as he could, his voice echoing from church to foreshore houses—"salvation for *her*. No, I tell ye. Her life is kent to me. It's better kent to Gode, that is a jealous Gode. There's no salvation for her. She has broken the law—*all* the laws—an' there's mair houp for you, Madge Knockans, that I see back there, than for that woman." All eyes were turned toward Bertha; not a voice was raised; in dumb silence they looked at her, her face wearing a bewildered expression of unexpected suffering. "Ye may girn, but you're fu' some, an' ye'll girn muckle mair on the day o' joodgment. Ay, my frien's, look at her—fair without, fause within; a deevil's picter, a ruined soul."

"Haud yer tongue, ye damned sweerin' auld sinner," cried a voice from the side of the church, and the grave-digger stepped forward.

Bertha had fallen at the foot of the cross; and as she lay there motionless, the sun streaming down upon her unconscious frame, no one moved from the crowd.

It was a divine intervention. God had stricken her at the word of His saint. Was it not unimpeachable testimony to the truth of his charge?

CHAPTER XXX.

MANAGEMENT.

THE days at the castle were very quietly spent. Lady Dutton, having on the advice of her doctor done many abrupt and drastic things since she fired the cannon, on the principle of shocking herself into good health, had relapsed into a life of elegant languor.

She lay in bed late, and she reclined much during the day, and when she read it was the inevitable French novel.

At the dinner-table she always appeared in a dignified and hospitable attitude to her guests. She did not care for them more than she cared for anything or anybody, but she realized that a summer of a rather tedious probation was to give her a life-time of subsequent ease.

The more she knew of Caroline the better she liked her as a prospective daughter-in-law. She reasoned with herself somewhat in this style: "Caroline is pretty enough and graceful enough to be a proper appendage to Sir Neil Dutton, whatever may be his position in life. She will never be more than an appendage, which is as it should be. I myself overshadowed, by my influence and abilities, my poor husband. It shelved him. Caroline will never shelve Neil. And her prettiness will attract him to just as much devotion as a man can keep up for any woman, especially a man with his mind filled with public affairs. She will not thrive, however, on absolute neglect; and for a lover, my son seems to take a great deal for granted at the present early stage of their attachment. But she has some good sense and few bad habits—I hope her love for liquors has declined since I spoke so seriously to her of the danger it incurred—and her taste in dress, if extravagant, is creditable. I shall make it a point never to see much of her or her good father after the marriage; in the meantime, 'the game is worth the candle.'"

And her ladyship would then turn to her work of fiction, her keen, hawk-like face as immovable as marble.

To her Caroline presented herself every forenoon, and Lady Dutton was secretly surprised at the girl's apparently boundless wardrobe. Caroline's maid liked to hurry her through as much dress as she could wear, knowing the profitable side it had for herself. And Caroline enjoyed being made the subject of ingenious experiments in cashmere and cambric; and her maid having an artist's eye and hand, which in certain noble families had not been permitted to develop themselves freely, adorned Caroline with a fine thankfulness that cost did not matter.

There was just the slightest touch of interest awakened in Lady Dutton's mind at the forenoon visit of the girl. She never allowed herself to criticise, or even to admire; but as Caroline came softly into her boudoir, a gliding vision of pink cashmere, which the next day was exchanged for blue, another for rose, or a delicate cream-color, Lady Dutton inwardly wondered which it was to be. Was it to be a cambric day, or a cashmere day, and what was the color to be—pink, blue, or cream? She liked her in one as well as another, and, in spite of her silence, Caroline saw that the changes of her wardrobe were not displeasing to Lady Dutton. She did not know that the sudden access of comparative poverty had given her ladyship such a glimpse of the gray expanses of life that the rustle of costly garments, or possibility of various changes of costume, coming into her boudoir were as refreshing to her ear and her eye as the sounds and sights of the autumn woodland to the weary dweller in cities. Lady Dutton liked luxury; every hint that revealed to her that there was no more meanness of pinching to be endured was a secret delight.

Caroline's robing and re-robing was thus more than amusement to her. It carried the only consolation to the heart of her ladyship that it was capable of receiving.

From Sir Neil, too, she was sure she had her reward. As she tripped into his library—he had forsaken the new library for the old, in the Gothic portion of the house, which overlooked the sea—and wound out and in among the pile of blue books, political memoirs, and papers that lay between him and her, he had looked up and called her his "chameleon." Now, what could a chameleon be if it was not something to be highly admired?

Sir Neil had gone from the new library to the old in order to let Mr. Frazer have a more comfortable room than the rent-house supplied. The library in the new part of the old castle was in every way more elegant and luxurious, but there was a coolness and space in the old library that suited the state of mind in which the young man found himself. The door-way was of oak, and swung on sandstone pillars; high above the topmost shelves was the arching roof giving room and air.

It was there that Sir Neil passed five hours of his day seriously at work among statistics of the United Kingdom, consular reports, foreign newspapers, and correspondence. Mr. Frazer took care that his young friend should have his hands full of employment which did not concern the estates. The correspondence from the borough of Westlands alone had grown to enormous proportions. A couple

of lawyers in Westlands kept several of their clerks, politically inclined, at the task of plying him with questions, as if they were "free and independent electors," who, at a date not very remote, would have the privilege of voting either for or against him.

But the day came when Mr. Frazer thought he might intrust some of the facts about the improvements of the estates to Sir Neil. All he had dreaded was the baronet's soft-heartedness in the event of the people who were being improved showing a rebellious attitude. He found that the first steps had been taken without any difficulty of the sort, so he entered the old library one forenoon, carrying with him a large chart.

"If you have a little time to spare from matters of graver moment, Sir Neil, I would like to show you how affairs are proceeding with regard to the estates." He spread the chart on a table at the window. "The Boulder runs there, you see. On the west are the home farm, the moors, and the quarry beyond. On the east there are the town, the grazing farm, Sandstone—inland, the quarries. The blue ink represents the quarries, the red the hamlets and villages. You follow me?"

"Certainly."

"That's the clean chart. Here's a marked chart with the improvements. See if you can read it?"

Sir Neil looked at it attentively, and on the east of the river, instead of a score or two of geographical dots representing steadings here and there, he saw a broad unmarked expanse, with two houses.

"Here is nothing that I can make out but two steadings and a group of houses at the blue ink."

"That's it. You've read it exactly. Two steadings remain—they are to be sheep farms. The rest of the population, or as much of it as will not go to Brisbane, will go back to the quarries. Quite so. See if you can make out the plan on the west of the river?"

"Sandstone is gone. The Kirkdale market is off the map. There are only one or two farms standing. Again the population is massed at the quarries."

"Capital, capital! You don't need explanations. You see it at once. And I'm glad to say, Sir Neil, that any little difficulties I might have anticipated are all smoothed away. We have taken down a large block of rotten houses on the foreshore; it will be turned into a shipping-yard for the quarries; the people in the meantime have accepted the sheds I had built for them. The fisher-people have found room among their friends. At Sandstone the roofs are off one or two houses. There's one man will give us trouble—Magnus, a pilot. And he keeps the rest of them troublesome. I expect to get most of them for the colonies yet. Then, this is a chart of the town. I haven't made up my mind about it entirely; but I have some idea instead of renewing the leases of the shops on one side of the square, to run them into one, and supply this side of the county from a general store. But that'll raise a great many local objections, and the scheme will keep till the quarries are in working condition. In the meantime I have orders that will employ all the quarries for the next two years."

Sir Neil laid down the chart in silence, and stood looking out on

the bay and Sandstone Head. He was thinking of what Bertha St. Clair had said to him not long before.

"There is only one fault to find with it all, Mr. Frazer. It treats the people as if they were nothing—so many units in a sum, so many marks on a map. I know that many of these people must object to being summarily driven from one place to another, without having a word to say to it. They have a right to object. They have been long on the land. There is Kirkdale market, for example. It has been a county market for hundreds of years, and you wipe it out."

"You will never need it again. The nearest market will be the market the steamer carries the cattle to. It is on the quarries I lay most of the chance for the estates looking up again."

"But have you no thought for the people? Besides, it seems to me that this very extensive dealing will bring on us a large crop of law suits."

"The county lawyers are all in my employment."

"Well, but look at it in the light of your political principles. I am only a sort of Liberal, I suppose. You go deeper down; you are a Radical, and your chief interest is for the people. Literally, you are driving them out of the country. How can you reconcile it with your Radical convictions?"

"My dear sir, politics and business are two very different things. I hope I know my duty to my party, and I hope I can always answer for doing it. In business it is not what is according to political principles, but what, by the rule of three, will best bring in the highest returns. Boulderstone is not under political management just now. It is under business management. There is nothing unfair in that."

Sir Neil was not reassured.

"True, it is not under political management, Mr. Frazer, if you mean by that it is not like Westlands, being prepared for an election contest. But don't you see that this wholesale eviction—wholesale as far as the leases will allow it—without the slightest consideration for the people's wishes, seems to me more arbitrary than a Liberal politician should sanction?"

"My dear sir, you're but young yet, and you'll pardon me if I tell you that you don't see things either politically or according to the rules of business. It was not for argument's sake I showed you the plans. It was to keep you enlightened with regard to the steps we are taking on the estates."

"I presume," said Sir Neil, hotly, "you will allow that I have some slight interest in them, and I may have principles of my own for their management."

Mr. Frazer had been facing an accumulation of little worries that day, and he was not inclined to make allowance for anything which looked like an obstacle.

"No, Sir Neil, I can not allow you to have principles with regard to the estates, in their present condition. You will live to thank me for the measures I am taking. I can entertain no observations which would hinder the plans I have determined to prosecute."

"You certainly are most arbitrary in your way of going about it."

The remark struck Mr. Frazer as impertinent. He was used to

consider everybody with whom he dealt in the light of a subordinate. Sir Neil he regarded as a subordinate, for whom he was doing a mighty service. His answer was made in proportion to that feeling.

"Young sir, there is no arbitrariness in the matter. The mortgages of Boulderstone are held by me. At this moment I have the power of foreclosure in my hand, which enables me to reduce your estates to your house and garden—all that you own by entail. I am, if you like to think of it in that light, managing my own affairs; you have no say in the matter."

"Then it seems that Boulderstone and all its concerns are simply the last speculation you have made, and that you have thrown in the Dutton family as an incident in the investment! I begin to see."

And the men parted in anger.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE MINISTER AND BERTHA.

MR. PETERSEN was in his vestry when Bertha St. Clair, recovering from her unconsciousness at the foot of the cross, was supported into a chair by his beadle. The circumstance had made a great impression on his mind—the more that he knew Bertha to be a strong, healthy girl, little given to the tremors of her sex.

He had kept her with him in the vestry till "the man" had finished his denunciation on the tombstone, and, at the risk of being late for his next church service, he had walked with her to the brow of the hill behind the town, where her own cottage was.

Bertha had not been well since the episode occurred, and Mr. Petersen had not seen her again, though he sent to ask after her health each day. She was so feeble and miserable that she could not meet her pupils.

Mr. Petersen having been instructed by the committee which appointed her to the charity-school with the mission of telling her that her services were no longer wanted, put off his visit as long as he could. But the duty was laid upon him, and one morning, having heard that Bertha was so much better that she would return to her work next day, he roused himself in his study, where he was elbow-deep in a translation of Schopenhauer. Mr. Petersen hated visiting as much as he liked to pursue his way through various labyrinths of philosophy and theology. His study was a dusty apartment, the floor littered with books as they had been dropped from his hand while following out some subject of historical or philological interest. The books in his shelves were uncomely, many of them tattered, whole rows of them leaned in an intoxicated attitude one upon another; and the room was always filled with a kind of blue mist which smelled strongly, as it well might, being the product of the strongest tobacco the seaport could supply. Next to his books Mr. Petersen preferred the mute, aerial fellowship of his pipe to, perhaps, anything on earth. If his affection for his wife could have been weighed in a balance with his affection for his pipe, it is doubtful which would have won the day.

It was with great trepidation that he roused himself from his elbow-chair when he heard of Bertha's determination to be at the school next day. His great boots were brought in, and bending his stout frame to the task, he strove with the straps and grew purple in the face, and finished the process with an emphatic stamp, first of one foot and then another.

Mrs. Petersen always hovered dutifully upon the staircase with a hard brush, and made angelic darts at the highest altitudes of his back she could reach on the painful occasions when he felt compelled to go beyond his own threshold. She was not always successful in removing the dust from his sluggardly shoulders; indeed, considering her tiny size, a broom would have been the proper instrument for the occasion; only Mrs. Petersen worshiped her husband, and a broom would have seemed a desecration of the temple.

This morning, as he passed out from the door with a "pshaw, pshaw," she was hardly able to touch him at all with the brush. And as he went through some streets on the way up hill it was noted at more than one door, "What a disgrace it is to the minister's wife to let him go out with his coat like that!"

Bertha was in her parlor when the minister knocked at her door, and very pale and dark about the eyes he thought her, as she came from beside the fire to welcome him. Perhaps she had heard of the decision of the committee, and there would be nothing for him but to offer her sympathy.

"You've got a severe shake, Miss St. Clair?"

"Thanks, Mr. Petersen but I am nearly well again. I shall take up my work to-morrow."

The minister inwardly groaned in spirit. Bertha did not know of the decision that banished her from the school.

"But you know, Miss St. Clair," said he, looking at her in a tender and fatherly way, "this will never do. I see that you are very far from well. You must put all thought of the school out of your mind."

Bertha smiled, and the kind tones of the minister's voice being all she had heard for a day or two, they touched her so that her eyes glistened with tears.

"Oh no; I should be miserable if I were to stop my work. There is no one to take my place."

Mr. Petersen knew that there was a gossiping old maid who gave cheap lessons on the piano who was quite certain to get the situation next; and as he looked at the stricken countenance, so full of sorrow, yet so sweet and frank and firm, he became a coward, and determined to abandon his mission to its fate. After all, why should he be the one to tell her this cruel thing they had done to her on the strength of a rumor that he well knew to be a lie? At any rate he could wait a little. He could approach the committee again, and renew the pleading he had already tried in vain on her behalf—if she could only be kept from the school in the meantime.

"I've been thinking," he began again, "that if you could persuade yourself to take a change of air, Miss St. Clair, my brother's people would be delighted to have you among them. He's a farmer

in the Lothians, and I'm sure a little change and rest would do you a world of good."

"But I can't leave Boulderstone. You don't quite understand. There's Captain Jansen, who has been obliged to take a change of air for his health—he's gone to sail the 'Petrel' for a friend. He has asked me to manage some things for him in connection with the new boats that are to become the fishermen's own when they have paid a share of them. I couldn't go, even if I were able to leave my pupils."

Mr. Petersen looked at her curiously.

"You come of a political people, Miss St. Clair. I suppose the feeling for public life is in your blood, and you can't help yourself. But, my dear girl, you are not aware of the persecution that you expose yourself to in throwing yourself as you do in these sort of enterprises. There's that millionaire at the castle—a man, I am bound to suppose, who is a Christian gentleman—but you've made an enemy of him; you have indeed. Will you not think of my proposal? My brother's girls are the kindest and best possible. They will be good to you, and you would have time to think of what you would like to do next."

There was a gravity and earnestness in the minister's address that Bertha could not mistake. Already she had been conscious of some impending danger—what, she did not know, though the assault made upon her at the cross by the old preacher had more than half revealed it to her. As she looked at the kind face of the stooping figure she attempted to speak, but the words would not come. She remained speechless, and the tears slowly overflowed her eyes, and before she could control herself she was sobbing bitterly.

"Forgive me—I am so nervous. And you are so good to me. But oh! tell me what it is that has happened. Why do people turn their backs on me? Why am I looked at and pointed at? Why should old men malign me? Have I done anything wrong?"

Her proud spirit was fairly broken; she wept freely, and through the mist of her tears and the deafness of anguish she was only vaguely conscious that a low voice was speaking to her in broken phrases about "the peace that passeth all understanding."

Poor Mr. Petersen! Poor Bertha! He had just risen from a spell of meditation in his own study in which the mystery of human life, and the darkness of the enigma of creation, and the uncertainty of the religions of the creeds, had been beating against each other in mortal combat. And here he was, by way of his profession, telling a young girl fallen into difficulties that the consolation of his faith was "the peace that passeth understanding."

As he looked at her in her agony, he seemed, however, to feel that for this wounded spirit there was nothing if not religious faith, and for the moment he cast out of his mind all private doubts of his own. So in one of the breaks in Bertha's audible grief he said, sadly:

"We are all apt to be too self-reliant, and perhaps to forget that outside of ourselves there is a guiding Power by whose directions we must walk."

"Oh, why do they persecute me?" cried the girl.

"They persecuted Christ, and the roar of their voices is ever most

loud against those they will not understand. Think of that gentle Spirit and the work God laid on Him, and how He did it, and how the world came round to Him long after He was laid in His Syrian grave."

Bertha listened, and her tears ceased flowing.

"Take courage, my girl, and be true to your own best nature, and you will live down all the malignities they may invent. But be advised by me, and give up for a time the interest you take in the affairs of the people of the foreshore, and rest yourself."

Bertha's eyes were dry again, and she was very quiet when she answered,

"But that would not be taking courage. That would not be daring what Christ dared." Again he thought he must tell her that they had taken her school from her; and again the cowardice of his kindness overcame him.

"Then God help you, my daughter," and bending on his knees, he lifted up his right hand and prayed,

"Spirit of Life and Light! Infinite Tenderness! Thou hast placed us here and surrounded our path with darkness. Dark is the goal to which we tend—dark the path we tread in reaching toward it; and on the way we faint and forget Thee. Yet we know that beyond the goal there is light; that the Spirit of Life is there; that the Infinite Tenderness is round about us; and that if we cry out amid our sorrow, in faith and expectation, strength will come. Stumbling on the way we ask counsel of Thee. Give us of the courage Thou hast granted to those who have walked the earth in anguish before our time. Give us of their assurance that Thou art; of their faith that from evil good will come; of their fidelity to their faith."

Bertha, with her fair head bowed, knelt beside the minister. He placed his large hand kindly upon her head.

"God, accept the offering of a sorrowful heart. Breathe Thy peace upon her. Thou hast called her to toil and self-sacrifice; give but one gleam of Thy divine light that she may see the way. And breathing Thy peace upon her, may the cry of the world be as nothing in her ears."

"You will promise me not to go near the school for some days," said the minister, bidding her good-by, for he had some design in his mind.

"I shall rest some days longer," answered Bertha, with a tranquillity she had not felt for a long time.

And Mr. Petersen walked away, feeling renewed faith in his work.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CONFIDENCE.

SIR NEIL DUTTON spent two unhappy days after the revelation made by Mr. Frazer about his relationship to the estates. He scarcely spoke to the capitalist at all; and Caroline, finding his answers vague, and his whole attitude toward her unsatisfactory, imitated Lady Dutton, and kept a good deal to her own room. For the first

time Sir Neil felt the misery of being in another man's power. No doubt Mr. Frazer meant to do the best for him, but he meant to do it in his own way, and the consciousness of that changed the baronet's point of view. During these days he no longer saw himself as the fortunate freeman, for whom the kind gods had arranged a programme of wealth, love, and happiness. He was a humble slave, tied to the chariot of the successful capitalist. He had neither power nor option of his own. He had not even a property beyond the margin of the entailed land which stopped at the garden walls and the moors to the west of the home farm. He was this man's, body and soul, until the marriage with his daughter should make him free. Free? Would he be free with Caroline Frazer at his side, companion for life; her whom in his hot haste he believed he loved when they were afloat on a sea of dreams, but whose character he was daily beginning to learn he had mistaken?

Sir Neil's misery sat on him gracefully. He never allowed it to abate the courtesy of his demeanor to any one about the castle. The dogs, perhaps, recognized a change in him faster than anybody, but even they were aware that it took no active, aggressive form to them. He only neglected them; that was all. So little did it show that the municipal authorities of Boulderstone, who dined at the castle two nights after the conversation, only thought the young laird "shy a wee," "rale respectfu'," "ower anxious," "may be a wee thing quate." They never dreamed that he was suffering the first real acute pangs of his life.

Long after the municipal authorities had gone, and every one in the modern wing of the castle was asleep, Sir Neil was sitting in the bleak, airy library, whose windows commanded the sea, and opened upon the flint bulwark by which the sea in the high tides was kept back. A fire was still flickering in the grate, and Sir Neil was sitting looking into it from a low chair which was flanked by piles of books not yet assorted on the shelves. Lights were burning in the bright silver candlesticks at his desk, but they did not illumine the dark corners of the room. One of his windows which opened like a door was ajar, and the young man half turned toward it from time to time as sounds from without stirred him from reflection to a present consciousness of the world about him.

The castle at that hour was as silent as the family vaults across the river; the fluttering of a bat through the open window, a hint from the furthest corridors that an owl had his nest among the turrets, the great moths that sought the lights, the low wail of a sea-bird in his watchfulness, from time to time broke the stillness.

The high arching sandstone above him, the wan aspect of the tomes and folios, the uncertain light which had not strength to dissipate the shadows of the corners, were not inspiring. As Sir Neil clasped the back of his head with his hands and stretched himself on his chair, he experienced a certain low level of feeling beneath which it was impossible for him to go. He hated to look forward to the future, he shrunk from the past; as he sat motionless in his chair he was grateful to the sea-birds for that cry of sorrow they sent along the shore; it seemed to say all that he felt of loneliness, disappointment, and lost hope. But as the night went on, the air

from the sea became keener, and he rose at last to fasten the window through which it was making its way.

He stood for a moment, and the wind lifted the hair on his brow. The great world of the moving sea and the blue arching sky was before him. He was keenly alive to its influence. After all, he thought, while his ears were filled with the noise of the roll of surf and his eyes sought the trembling stars, if one brings one's little troubles to this bare edge of the world they seem paltry enough. He walked out on the bulwark; it was one of the northern nights in which darkness never completely covers the sea and the land. Though it was not yet midnight, Sir Neil could distinguish the outline of the coast as if it were early morning, with the sun breaking in orange and gold through the intervening mists.

He could see the bowlders between him and the rocks, and standing to look, as his eyes became more familiar with the objects in the half light, he started. On a bowlder between him and the rocks and the sea, he certainly saw a human figure—a woman bending toward the sea—her hands pressed to her ears.

Could it be some poor woman watching for her husband's boat? Sir Neil did not ask the question twice; it was evidently some one in trouble, and that was enough for him. In a few moments he had stepped across the beach and his hand was on the shoulder of the figure. As the woman looked up with a convulsive start and shiver, Sir Neil saw it was Bertha St. Clair who was before him.

"You are cold and wearied," he said, in a voice full of tenderness, "God knows you have reason to be. Let me help you into the castle." He said no more, but gently assisted her over the stones, up the steps of the bulwark, through the window of his room, and to the hearth where there was still some fire burning. He led her to a chair, and dashed at the contents of the grate until they flashed and blazed. Having omitted to shut the window, he went back and fastened it securely.

Bertha had not spoken as yet. When he returned from the window she was sobbing quietly on her chair.

Then he left her, and for some minutes the girl was alone in the great, weird chamber. She heard his footsteps dying away in the corridor, and, not knowing that he might not return with his mother or Mr. Frazer, she tried to subdue the sobs which shook her.

By the time Sir Neil had returned with a decanter of wine the first paroxysm was over, and Bertha was able to speak, and said, in a broken voice, "They told me you would not see me."

"It was a falsehood; I was never told you wished to see me. Tell me how it was; and I am so glad there is something I can do for you."

He was standing with his elbow on a projection of the carved mantel-piece, and as she turned her pale face toward him, he read in her deep, tearful eyes a sorrow much profounder than his own. It even flashed upon him, as he looked, that the girl might have been waiting for the tide to put an end to the suffering which seemed to overpower her.

"He has taken away the school from me, and my house and my garden are no longer my own, and I have lost my character, and my

work is not finished; and I will not, oh, no, I will not leave Boulderstone, and I shall face it all."

Then Bertha became incoherent, and Sir Neil waited patiently, with his elbow still on the ledge.

"Of course all this is Frazer's doing. I thought, I hoped, you were strong enough to beat him. He is a remorseless, cruel man."

The sound of his voice soothed her, and, as she looked up at him again, he was rewarded with the faintest outline of a smile.

"Is it then so bad as you suppose?" he asked, looking down at her, and noting the slight return to calmness.

Bertha drew two letters from her pocket and handed them to him. He read them rapidly, and saw at a glance how matters stood. It was exactly as she had said. The school committee had dismissed her; the owner of the cottage and garden had sent in a bill of arrears, which he said had been accumulating for three seasons, and which must be settled at once on pain of selling the furniture. He saw the plutocrat's hand in both circumstances.

"How can I help you, Miss St. Clair?"

"Speak to them; tell them it is not your wish that my school should be taken from me. He has done it all in your name; and I knew, Sir Neil Dutton, that you were not persecuting me."

"But I am in his power," he replied, sadly, taking a turn round the room, and coming back to offer her wine, which she refused.

"You must have been very unhappy," he added, "to have remained through the night on that bleak strand. Why, you might have been drowned."

"Oh, no, I am too great a coward," she replied, divining by his look that he thought she might have courted death.

"When they told me at the door that you had sent a message that you would not see me, I went out on the beach. Then your light came into the window, and I think I fell asleep."

It was not so bad as he had thought; so, stirring the fire, he heaped more coals on it and sat down facing Bertha.

"Can you imagine Mr. Frazer's surprise if he were to step in here?" he asked, the unwonted nature of the visit beginning to appeal to him.

But Bertha had not heard him; she was thinking of what he had said about his being in the power of Mr. Frazer and she was wondering how she might help him out of it.

"I did not understand," she said reflectively, "I thought he was your man of business. I believed you could do as you liked."

"I am engaged to his daughter, Miss St. Clair, and he has undertaken to make the estates keep us after we are married. There are mortgages on the estates, and he owns them. He is real proprietor here; I have only the name of it. I am a most unhappy man. I shall, however, be master enough to insist upon you being restored to the school; and you shall certainly not be touched in your cottage. I give you my word for it that neither Frazer nor committee shall gainsay me on that point."

Then Bertha rose, feeling that she had him on her side: but there was confusion in her face as she thought of the girl who was engaged to the man before her, and, unconscious of this visit, asleep in another part of the castle.

"I should not have been here," she said, passing her hand across her brow, "but, oh! I have suffered so much, and I am not used to being an outcast, and they have stopped me when I had so much to do."

"You shall not go yet," said Sir Neil, firmly, but gently. "No one ever comes here at this time, and if any one did, I hope I should know how to protect you from misapprehension."

He made her sit down in her chair again, and seated himself opposite to her. He longed to tell her all his unhappiness, yet hesitated, thinking of her greater loneliness and misery.

"I was voyaging in the Mediterranean last year," he then began, without any remark to lead up to it, "and Caroline Frazer was with us. One morning we went up a hill-side and reached a shrine. A snake had crept out on the road before we reached it, and I carried Caroline in, for she had fainted. I am superstitious. Looking from Caroline to the shrine, I saw, or thought I saw, a resemblance between her and the sculptured saint. I drew conclusions from the likeness. I thought she was as beautiful in her heart and mind as the saint she resembled. I thought that life would become sweet and pure in her very presence, and I longed to pledge her to me. In a few weeks she had promised me her love, and I believed it was her beauty and her worth which had drawn me to her. Not a year has elapsed since then, and I have learned—what have I learned? That the beautiful saint is clay of the commonest sort—that I, who imagined I was in pursuit of beauty and worth, was only looking for gold. And I am in honor bound to this girl whom I do not love, whose father I have begun to hate. Could you be much more unhappy than that, Miss St. Clair?"

Bertha was silent, and looked at him timidly. Something told her that he who makes confession of that sort is already in love with his confessor. She trembled a little and again rose. He stood up also.

"We can not help each other," she said, regarding him with wide eyes, and turning to the window. It was but midnight, but there was the stir of morning beyond the bulwark. A violet light had come into the sky, and it seemed as if day were about to break. There was a sound as of singing of birds from the gardens, among the lime-trees—the first uncertain piping before the morning flood of melody.

"Don't say we can not help each other," Sir Neil replied, taking her hand in his own. "You have helped me much already; you have broken the terrible loneliness of my life. I now feel that, happen what may, I have a friend who knows and who sympathizes."

"But," said Bertha, withdrawing her hand, "it is not right—you have pledged your honor."

"Hush! I am a miserable slave, and I know it. But let me have one moment—"

She walked rapidly to the window; the candles began to flicker in their sockets, and presently went out, and the pair stood in the light of the dawn.

"I fear I have been foolish and have brought you new trouble," and Bertha's pale face looked a little ghastly in the morning light.

He, too, was ghastly, in his yesterday's dinner-dress, as he gazed on her in the breaking day.

"Nothing could add to my trouble; your visit has been like an angel's. But I shall see you home."

"I am an outcast—I have no home."

He laid his hand upon her arm gently and respectfully.

"Look up, Bertha. I could have loved you had I dared." She started convulsively, and her lips moved without speech. "I am bound to another, but you shall not want a home and friendship. Come."

And he led her out into the morning light, and arm-in-arm they walked toward the river.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AN EXTEMPORE DISCOURSE.

"My woman," said Mr. Petersen, at his tea-table one evening, looking over the top of a volume relating to the qualification of the predicate, and addressing his wife, who was hemming for the heathen, "there is a total lack of charity among your sex. It would not surprise me if at the bottom of your heart you were as glad as any of them that this young girl has been turned adrift."

"Oh, no, pa; I am very sorry for Miss St. Clair, I am sure. But she has been indiscreet, and she is only suffering the natural consequences."

"Natural consequences" was a large phrase for so small a woman to use. It had crept into her vocabulary from the pulpit of the parish church, where her husband often used it.

Mr. Petersen disliked it, however, and, raising his spectacles to his brow, he gazed at his wife and exclaimed, in an emphatic manner,

"Pshaw! with your natural consequences. I tell you I have been moved as nothing has ever moved me by that girl's behavior in the midst of the tattle and scandal of this virulent microcosm of a town."

"You are not hard to move sometimes, where prettiness is concerned, James," said his wife, facetiously, her own gentle and sweet countenance lighting up as she spoke.

"You are frivolous, and if you understood this girl's case as I do you would speak more seriously about it. Do you understand, my woman, that not one of the sisters in the church will speak to the girl. Such is the influence of Lady Dutton and the interesting but bitter young creature who is engaged to her son."

"I know it all, James, as well as you do; and indeed I think Captain Jansen has behaved shamefully to her. Old enough to be her father, and there he is. Instead of marrying her, he's gone to sea again, like the sailor he is!"

"No, you don't know it all," said the minister, hotly, pouring out his own tea for himself in an affronting manner, as if there were no wife behind the cozy; "you don't know it all. You are one of the sisterhood in your heart, and you are hard and uncharitable to her. And you are weakly offended because she will not go to the

Lothians upon your invitation. Why should she go to the Lothians, forsooth? She is right to stay and to crush the scandal-mongers."

"James, James; there's Mr. Frazer coming up the walk."

"I loathe that man," said the minister, hastily looking down his garden, up which the capitalist was advancing.

"I beseech of you, James, to keep your temper, and to remember your wife and family. They say there's nothing that man can not do if he sets his mind upon it."

"Pshaw!" said the irritated husband, stalking out of his parlor to take refuge among his books. During disagreeable interviews he always retired thither. It was there he met the deputation consisting of the wood merchant, the draper's foreman, the cobbler, and two old maids, who recently informed him that there was an absence of "Gospel truth" in his discourses. Among his books he always found his ideas readily. He found language to couch them in, without any of the painful hesitation of the pulpit. The tattered backs and familiar reds and blues and duns of the shelves restored at a glance any weakness in his argument or sinking in his courage. Behind the tattered covers there were voices, and behind the voices individualities, and Mr. Petersen mentally appealed to them on all such occasions.

The appearance of Mr. Frazer disturbed him, for he had lost his temper at the last meeting of the committee, when the members positively declined to recall the dismissal of Miss St. Clair. And he knew no reason why he should be called upon, now that the business was finished contrary to the way he wished it. He was stalking uneasily up and down his own room when his wife reappeared.

"James, dear, you must meet him in the drawing-room. He's perfectly kind and nice. He has taken a great interest in the boys, and there's no saying what he might not do for them."

Mr. Petersen looked down upon his small wife, and his dark eyes were positively fierce. But she was of the smallness which never quails before size, and she understood her husband's furies to be only another sort of affection.

"You know, James, there is so strong a smell of smoke, and I'm sure from his appearance that Mr. Frazer won't like it, he is so neat and dainty."

And Mrs. Petersen opened the window.

"Who is this man that I should dance attendance upon him? Show him up here or let him depart. Smoke, indeed! That his nostrils should be considered! I will not meet him in the drawing-room."

Mr. Petersen would not only not meet him out of his own peculiar stronghold, but the interdict upon smoking raised so strong a desire in him for tobacco that he forthwith filled a pipe and vehemently puffed it as he strode from door to fire-place.

He was thus engaged when Mr. Frazer entered.

"Study, study, study," said the capitalist, affably, having shaken hands with the minister.

"You don't spare yourself, Mr. Petersen. Have you read all these now?" sweeping the litter of volumes with a patronizing motion of his right arm.

"No, not by any means all, if you would comprehend in that

chapter by chapter, and word by word. Some of them are for complete perusal, many of them are for reference. I have dipped into them all, and seen the drift and tendency where it was needful."

"I could lend you an office-boy to arrange them," said Mr. Frazer, whose orderly habits were outraged by the spectacle.

"Thank you," replied the minister, in a dignified voice. "To your eye there is confusion no doubt, but the chaos is only on the surface. I trust there is cosmos reigning over the distribution of them."

Mr. Frazer sneezed.

"Your tobacco must be very nauseous, minister," he observed with candor. But he drew from his pocket a cigar-case, and to protect himself began smoking vigorously.

The minister of the Gospel had hoped that the tobacco would be disagreeable; he was a little disappointed at the decided symptoms of *camaraderie*.

"I haven't long to wait, but I would like you to promise me a favor. I want you to take the chair at a meeting in the Town Hall."

"In what connection?"

"I'm bringing a lecturer from the South who understands the colonies, and he is to tell the folks hereabouts what he knows. You have heard, perhaps, that a number of farmers and laborers will have to quit the parish whether or no, and they may as well hear where they can better themselves. In taking the chair I would like you to work up the subject a little—you know best how. The lecturer is a practical man; he'll give them details about the passage out, the price of labor, and the rates for colonial land. You might give them something poetical—gild the lily, and that sort of thing. That goes down wonderfully. And you could throw in a peroration about prosperity and self-help. They tell me your funds are low in your foreign missions. That looks bad in the 'Church Magazine.' Put me down for £20."

Mr. Petersen laid his pipe on the mantel-piece and glared at his visitor.

"The colonial propagandism is part of your scheme for the depopulation of Boulderstone and the neighborhood. The people are to be told of a land overflowing with milk and honey, not because the land actually exists, but because it is convenient for you that they should believe it to exist. Sir, I object to your policy in Boulderstone, and I will not gild the lily even at the upset price of £20 for foreign missions and the saving thereby of my own credit in the 'Church Magazine.'"

Mr. Frazer darted a quick, serpentine look at the minister. He had judged him to be a secular, sensible fellow, who would be likely to fall in with any schemes propounded from the castle. His own dealings with the clergy had chiefly been as patron. This man's opposition was irritating.

"I see no necessity for a minister of the Gospel entertaining opinions on these subjects at all," he added, in a brusque, high voice, lowering his cigar and wearing his most ungenial expression.

"Why, neither do I. But if you seek to press certain opinions

upon me which I do not hold, save in contempt, then you must expect to be informed how I regard them. I look upon your policy, sir, as pernicious. This neighborhood has been a highly prosperous one; its inhabitants are perfectly content with their lot; a little judicious management by the investment of capital in boats and appliances is all that is required to make it a model community. But you come and reform it off the face of the earth after the destructive and innovating fashion of the Radicals. I repeat, sir, that I will have nothing to do with your emigration policy. I will sit in no chair to give countenance to your schemes. Already you have driven to the quarries some scores of families who have been barely provided with a covering for their heads. You have pulled down the houses of fishermen who can not replace them."

"'Fools and bairns should never see things half done,' Mr. Petersen," interrupted Mr. Frazer; "will you listen to reason?"

"To reason I hope I am always willing to listen."

"Indeed, they say there's more reason than faith in your sermons, and that your neighbors of the Presbytery are alive to the fact."

"When my professional brethren bring that subject before the Presbytery, sir, it will be time enough for me to consider it. In the meantime it is an irrelevance. You have done more, sir, than disorganized the community; those who have opposed you, you have attempted to ruin. To whom shall I attribute the persecution of that young girl, Miss St. Clair, but to you?"

"Dods! this is intolerable," said the little man, while the tall figure loomed above him through the blue mist.

"I have a pastoral capacity, sir, and duties to discharge in that respect," pursued the minister, sawing the air with his right hand.

"I don't recognize it. You're a known infidel and heretic, and you'll find that to your cost."

"And it is part of my duty to tell you that, in the name of peace and industry, you are bringing ruin upon numerous families."

Mr. Frazer groped for the door.

"In the name of peace and industry, you—one of the aristocracy of the mill and the counting-house—are ousting the people from their cherished homes."

"Fiddlesticks! minister," said the new aristocrat, reaching the door and turning to survey his eloquent opponent.

"The new aristocracy; and I have known something of you in the west ends of your cities, where you build your mansions, and accumulate your silks and your velvets, your silver and your gold. Jugglers of the markets. And you send your children to the counties to occupy the land, and you have no traditions of honor or dignity, aspiration or character, to send with them. They know not the land and its necessities. They care not for the people. They make a solitude and call it plenty. But God and right will triumph over you, sir," continued Mr. Petersen, his spectacles advancing to the tip of his nose, and his head in consequence raised in the air.

"Blasphemy, minister, blasphemy," said the capitalist, who could with difficulty keep his tongue from one of the oaths of his early, unconverted days.

"No, sir, God will not permit the land to pass from the hands

of those who have tilled it for generations that you may make a better market. He will not permit His little ones"—Mr. Frazer had got out on to the landing and was looking for his hat—"to be turned from their homes into the pitiless blast and naked cast upon the bleak hill-side"—Mr. Frazer was half down-stairs, but the minister, his voice echoing through the hall, was following him with great strides—"in order that your conveyances may be heaped with stone, and that you may batten in the midst of your luxuries. Rather will God put it into the heart of the people to rise against you and repudiate—"

Mr. Frazer had reached the door. He let himself out, and rapidly slipped down the steps; and the minister paused.

Great beads of perspiration were on his brow. As he turned, his wife looked at him ruefully from the dining-room door. She had never heard him so vehement in her life before.

But the thought occurred to her that James would yet be possessed of "a city charge," and it consoled her a little.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ELECTION NEWS.

MR. FRAZER was an early riser. Partly it was the effect of a habit contracted when he was a poor man, and partly it was due to a custom he religiously observed. The custom was to read a chapter of the Old Testament, and nothing ever made him neglect it. He did not pick and choose in the literature of the Hebrews, and attempt to find solace or strength in exceptional passages. He read straight forward—a genealogy was as good to him as a psalm, a story of vengeance was as consoling as a beatitude. He was most conscientious. A long chapter might happen to come up on a morning, when he was short of time, but he would rather break an engagement or risk losing a train than shirk his reading. He had once omitted the exercise early in his business career, and the day had cost him £1500. He never forgot the circumstance. His habit soon told at the castle, for it had enabled him to pounce upon the assistant gardeners, to stir up the languid steward, and to fling a word in season to the sleepy grooms. Each morning he came in from his circuit of the parks and gardens before any other body had reached the breakfast-room. It gave him a sense of superiority which was the breath of his life.

The morning after the events described in the last chapter he was strolling among the cropped grass of the park enjoying the freshness of the breeze though he was not conscious of it, and calculating how long the Boulderstone "job" would take him to complete, when a man on horseback attracted his attention. He had galloped through the open gate of the lodge in what was inexcusable haste, if there were not some message of importance to deliver.

Mr. Frazer strolled down toward him with a few fine incisive phrases on his tongue, which he promised himself the pleasure of bestowing on the rider if there were no excuse for his hurry.

The man handed him a packet which checked the speech. It

was a set of delayed telegrams and a bundle of newspapers. He soon mastered the contents. Westlands had no longer a Parliamentary representative. The borough which his agents had been warming was now vacant, and Sir Neil Dutton's chance had come.

Mr. Frazer returned in great excitement to the castle. He had been in a state of suppressed irritation at the young man for several days; his ingratitude, and his silence, and his airs had been most aggravating. But the sight of his name in print seemed to put a new value on him. Mr. Frazer read in a friendly paper, as he went along, that Sir Neil Dutton, about to be connected by marriage with one of the most influential Scotch houses, was a man of great promise. He had the fault of youth, perhaps, but every day would improve him in that respect. He had not had the opportunity of making any public appearances, but his paper read before the Social Science Association had been marked by original thought, and had been remarked by all who heard it. He was the scion of a Tory house, it was true, but in these advanced days it was permitted to a young man thinking for himself to break with the traditions which bound him to a party. Taking him all in all, the liberal interests of Westlands would be likely to be well served by one who had traveled far, seen many men, and who, so far as his youth would allow him, had sound and mature opinions on the leading questions of the day.

An unfriendly journal had another version.

It called him the bankrupt heir of a great Conservative house, who accepted the aid of a wire-pulling Radical to start him in life. It said he was one of the young Scotch aristocracy—unfortunately, not uncommon—who had an unaccountable leaning to social doctrines; that he had been on the Continent, and tampered with communism; that he had been in America, and had lost the decorous sense of class distinction; and that if Westlands desired to maintain the Constitution and the Law, it would send this whippersnapper to Jericho, where he might tarry until his beard grew.

"Get your master into his things at once," said Mr. Frazer to Sir Neil's man, who was lingering about the hall; "give him these telegrams."

And in his enthusiasm he rubbed his hands, walked from the breakfast-room to the dining-room, from the dining-room to the study, and out into the open air. He took the vacancy in Westlands as an omen that the beginning of the success of all his schemes had come.

Sir Neil was not long in appearing.

He had not slept the whole night through, and he presented a haggard and care-worn face to the other, who stood with his back to the fire in the breakfast-room.

Instead of leaving Bertha, wearied as she was, to find her way to her cottage, Sir Neil had put her into a boat, and, the tide being high, he had rowed her up through the town bridge, and set her down on the bank not far from her garden.

It was now broad daylight as he came down the stream, and he was aware that, rowing as he was in the dress he had assumed for dinner the evening before, he had appeared rather an interesting object to the watchman who had strolled to the bridge, and, further

down, to the old man who was unaccountably looking out of a window of one of the villas, in his nightcap, to see the sun rise.

Mr. Frazer could not but notice the look of the young man.

"Are you ill?" was his first greeting, in a tone of voice which had as much irritability as kindness in it.

"Thank you, no; I'm all right. This is sudden news about Westlands."

And Mr. Frazer thought no more of his looks.

"You will have to post over in time to catch the afternoon train. You see they expect you to make a statement to-morrow night. The agent has managed very cleverly. All the halls are taken for you already, and the newspapers are on the scent. It's very smart work. You will be returned, I've no manner of doubt."

Sir Neil had taken his resolution before he appeared. He meant to make his visit to Westlands the opportunity for exacting a promise from Mr. Frazer about Bertha St. Clair.

"Before I go to Westlands, Mr. Frazer, you must promise me two things. Miss St. Clair must be restored to her school, and the threat of selling her furniture, on the plea that her garden has been a failure for three seasons, must be abandoned."

Mr. Frazer glanced at the worn, jaded-looking baronet, and on his own shining morning face there gathered a frown of high displeasure. But he mastered his temper, and simply said:

"You would be better to give your whole mind to the election, Sir Neil Dutton. Leave Boulderstone and its affairs to me."

At that moment Caroline stepped into the room. She advanced to her father and kissed him lightly, and turned to her future husband with a sparkle in her eyes.

Sir Neil shivered imperceptibly, but still he shivered.

"Dear me," said Caroline, "you look as if you had been up all night."

"Do I?" replied Sir Neil, neither advancing to greet her nor allowing himself to meet the glance of her eyes.

"Have you heard the news?" he added, handing her a newspaper, which, as luck would have it, was the one containing the unfriendly comments.

"Dear me!" and Caroline feigned an interest she did not feel; "and Westlands is vacant. You've got your character here: 'Send back this whipper-snapper to Jericho, where he might tarry until his beard grew.'"

Caroline sat down at table, and wished the men to follow her example. But Sir Neil still remained standing. He said, quietly:

"Mr. Frazer, we must come to some definite understanding about Miss St. Clair."

"I know nothing about her, and consequently there can be no understanding so far as she is concerned."

"At least you can promise me what I ask."

"Is it that girl who has the school?" Caroline interposed. "Whatever can you want with her, Neil? Don't you know that there's nobody in Boulderstone would speak to her? She's an out-cast."

The baronet started. How near was that description to Bertha's own!

"It is because I know it that I insist upon her being reinstated."

Mr. Frazer muttered something to himself about an impracticable ass, and taking his seat at table held out his hand for his cup. Any one coming into the room at the moment and seeing the well-conditioned little gentleman and his plump, comely daughter at the table, with the tall, anxious, stooping figure on the hearth-rug, must have concluded that it was the lord of the manor who was at the table giving audience to a poor relative.

"I shall let Westlands take its chance, then, for a couple of days, until I shall have arranged for Miss St. Clair being re-appointed. She has been scandalously treated."

Mr. Frazer grew pale with anger; his fork shook on his salmon steak, but he repressed himself. He pretended not to hear; and the wearied youth sat down opposite him, his resolution firmly taken.

"You're quite horrid," said Caroline, addressing both the men, after a pause. "I'm sure if there's anything to do that will help either of you to look like yourselves I will do it."

A bright idea struck the baronet. Would Caroline call on Miss St. Clair? Certainly. Would she take a letter to her? To be sure.

"My dear Carry," he said, with a cordiality which reminded her of their yachting days the year before, "if you do so you will help me more than I can tell you."

Mr. Frazer snorted, but in spite of himself looked a little less ungenial. Caroline and the baronet, he felt, might propose, but he certainly would dispose.

"Do as you please about it," he said, returning to the question of the election with great loquacity; and so a compromise was struck.

Before he rode off that forenoon. Sir Neil had given a letter into Caroline's hand which she was to deliver to Bertha. It would be the beginning of the public recognition of Bertha; it would help him to keep his own promise to Caroline, which he had now a growing desire to break.

But the history of the letter was brief. Sir Neil had hardly ridden out of sight when Mr. Brock reined up at the hall door. The letter became one of a batch to be delivered in Boulderstone that day, but it never reached its destination.

The same evening the auctioneer and the fiscal's clerk went over to Bertha's cottage and ticketed the furniture. They were followed by a sheriff's officer, who locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

In the dark Bertha sat looking on to the river, and, tearless, she realized that she had not where to lay her head.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LICENSE.

CAROLINE felt Sir Neil's absence to be a great relief. He had been neglecting her, and she resented the neglect. He had long been silent in her presence, and had dropped all flattery. His caresses had ceased. When he bade her good-night he no longer kissed

her. There was a constraint in all his kindness, and he never sought to see her by herself.

On the other hand, Mr. Hew Brock was as assiduous in his attentions as he could be. Caroline was never in the town but she was sure to encounter him, booted and spurred like the cavalier he was to her, and his tight shooting costume binding him up in a cask-like roundness which commended itself to her eyes. There was a warrior fire in his blazing cheeks and short-cropped red hair which gave Caroline little thrills and ripples of delight as she looked up at the leering eyeballs which ogled her from their prominent sockets.

"Ane wad suppose it was Brock o' the Keep that was to marry the millionaire's dochter," said the barber to the watch-maker, as the pair walked into the square one day while the contest in Westlands was still in progress, and the baronet was out of the town.

"Fegs you wad think it. But I wadna be in that Brock's shoes for the keep an' a' that's in it. He's gotten Magnus o' Sandstone—the big pilot chield—into the jile, an' they tell me the Sandstone lads 'll do for him. It's a peetiful thing that men like the Sandstone folk should be turned frae hoose an' hearth tae feed that muckle lump's sheep an' nowts. They tell me he's no fairmer at a'. He's just doin't oot o' spite for what Magnus gie'd him last winter. But Frazer and him is hand and glove in the improvements. An' Frazer's gotten roond the Cooncil. My certie, when the November elections come roond they'll hear about the improvements, an' twa three other things beside."

Caroline and her admirer passed up the steps of the Town Hall. Sir Neil Dutton, senior, in the dignity of monumental marble, sat at the door.

"He has his eye on you—you had better take care," said Caroline, with a light laugh.

Mr. Brock replied by switching the statue on the shoulders as they passed upstairs.

There was an old man in the anteroom which separated the museum from the hall. He had been pensioned by the late baronet, and it was his duty to see that the building was cared for in all its parts.

"I say, old boy," said Mr. Brock, "here's a sixpence and a three-penny-bit. Go along to Swanson's inn, and wait till my man comes in from the Keep. He'll be in in a few minutes. Bring the letter he will give you. Ask him for it."

"I will that, sir," answered the old man, joyfully pocketing the money and making for the door.

"Oh, you clever man," said Caroline, as they stood alone in the museum.

It was a small room, with a high roof and cool, whitewashed walls. There were Ordnance Survey maps in it; from various eminences stuffed birds of local repute stared in front of them; in side cases fragments of all the sandstones and crystals and schists reposed; a stuffed baboon on a tree, with the remains of a highly intelligent face, presided in a corner.

"Two's company, three's none!" exclaimed Mr. Brock, sententiously.

"This place makes me melancholy," observed Caroline, stooping

over a case, and pretending to be unconscious of the arm which was passed round her waist.

"Do they get gold here?" she continued, looking into a slab of slate in which there were polygons and hectagons of metal shining.

Her voice was lower, and she trembled a little; her companion had stooped and kissed her neck.

At that moment a boy made his appearance at the door—a vulgar fisher-lad without coat or jacket. Mr. Brock opened his jaws and swore at him.

"I'm to keep the Toon Ha' till the man comes back. He said I was to do it."

Brock strode to the door, and the boy dodged him, retiring backward into the large hall. Caroline still leaned over the case, and with beating heart heard her admirer's vain thundering on the other side of the closed door. Then there was a scuffle and the sound of a whip, and Heatherhead was bundled down-stairs.

"They're the damnedest, unruliest lot I ever came across," said Mr. Brock, returning and closing the door behind him. His exertions had broken the back of his passion, and Caroline now led the way into the other room, the hall where there was to be the great lecture on emigration, and a service of buns at the door.

"Will you speak the night of the lecture?" asked Caroline, crossing the spacious floor toward the platform, where she had undertaken to superintend the erection of evergreens and arrangement of geraniums.

"Me speak!" said the land-owner, with a noisy laugh. "Give me the light fantastic toe, the mazy dance," and he gyrated round the hall to impress Caroline with an idea of his lightness and grace.

"I would like you for a partner, Hew," said Caroline, admiring him for his rotundity, his amiability, and his vigor; for had he not just laid his whip to the back of a vulgar little boy?

"Thank ye for that: it's the first time you've called me Hew; may it not be the last!"

Caroline, as he was again in neighborly proximity, exclaimed: "Oh dear, I've made an awful mistake with that baronet. I'm weary, weary of him." Thus encouraged, she was led to a chair in a recess in the window, and Brock sat with his arm round her, telling her that she should break her engagement.

"Govydict! I'll tell. I see ye, I see ye," shouted a voice from a door opposite, and the bronze head of Heatherhead inserted itself.

Brock flung his whip, and its heavy handle indented the door. The boy picked it up and fled. It was an expensive whip, and Brock was solicitous about his goods; he therefore pursued the boy. But there seemed to be a labyrinth of doors, all of which had to be opened before he could reach the youth.

While he was still fumbling at them and muttering curses, Heatherhead let himself in by the door leading to the platform, and seated himself in a chair not far from Caroline.

"Go away, you nasty little brute," said she, gathering her dress together, and making a movement of disgust as Heatherhead on his chair leaned his cheek on his hand, and turned up the whites of his eyes sentimentally, and tapped his toes with the whip.

"Hew, Hew!" she screamed, as the laird still fumbled at the handle of a door outside, "he's here."

"Min' ye, I'll tell on ye. That's no' your lad. He has nae bizniz tae be kissen' ye. I saw him."

"Oh, you abominable liar!"

Brock had gone round, and was returning by the entrance from the museum.

Heatherhead still sat making sentimental faces at Caroline.

"I shall faint if you don't take this wretch from the room."

Brock charged down the hall; Heatherhead deftly pushed the chair between his feet, and bounded up the platform.

"He's a perfect devil," said the girl; "he's making me quite nervous."

"I'll ca' at the castle wi' the whup," said Heatherhead, leaning over the platform, and looking down at the laird, who had "shinned" himself and who was puffing hard after his exertions.

Apparently there was to be no more peace for them. They went out into the square and Brock told a policeman that a boy had stolen his whip and might be caught in the Town Hall.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HEATHERHEAD'S DISCOVERY.

BOY HEATHERHEAD was the only one who attended "the roup" at Juniper Bank. He was not made very welcome, for, on showing himself at the gate on the morning of the event, the sheriff's officer, who was standing at a table from which the auctioneer was to direct the public competition for Bertha's goods, scowled upon him fiercely. Heatherhead was used to that expression of visage, and as he leaned upon the gate he regarded the sheriff's officer's contortions with perfect calmness. As that functionary made as if he would come toward the gate, Heatherhead presented his tongue at him; and on his actually approaching he turned and saluted in the entirely vulgar fashion in which the savages saluted Robinson Crusoe on his second visit to his island. As he expected, the arm of law then lifted a stone and flung it at him, after which he turned back to the house, the boy also going back and again leaning his chin on the gate.

Heatherhead was the only one of Bertha's older pupils who was not at sea. For ten days he had not seen his mistress, though he had been to school in the lane each day; and he had heard several discomforting things about her: one was that she had not been treated well by Captain Jansen.

In the captain's absence from home, Heatherhead felt that there was nothing he could do to help his mistress's cause. But in the meantime he made Jean Scott as miserable as it was in his power to make her. For one thing, he got the root of a cabbage—otherwise "a runt"—and filling it with hemp and lighting it, blew through the key-hole of the captain's door. Jean's nostrils were shortly regaled by the unmistakable smell of fire. Heatherhead was rewarded by hearing her addressing various terms of exclamation and alarm to Oscar, who barked furiously from within. By the

time Jean had opened the front door Heatherhead had transported himself to the back door, where he blew his smoking oakum with all the vigor of his lungs. But it was only a trifling consolation to him at best, and had very nearly been a disaster, for, Oscar having discovered him before Jean, he was once greatly in peril of being torn to pieces. At the school-house in the lane he was rather more successful. Having gone on the roof and placed a slate across the chimney, the ventilation of the school ceased, and in very anguish of despair Bertha's successor had to proclaim a holiday. He was aware that the dominie at the parish school was no admirer of Bertha, and it consoled him a little to waylay the boy who was sent to the saddler's for cane-wood, and to split the ends of each cane, inserting a hair of his own bronze head as a sovereign medium for splitting the instrument further where it was used on the human palm. He also knocked from time to time at the school door, and succeeded thrice in bringing the dominie to the open air, under the wrong impression that somebody wanted to see him. Nobody would tell Heatherhead anything about Bertha. Was she gone for good and all? He could not discover. He had followed Minister Petersen half over the town, intending to ask him where his mistress was, and when she would be back again, and why that ither ane was in the school-house. But when he came upon the minister, near his own gate, he was talking to himself in a way fearful to behold, and grasping his stick with such violence that Heatherhead did not dare to address him at first; but when the minister had got through his gate, he ventured to ask, "Please, sir, whaur's the school-mistress?" but the only answer he received was a frown and a shake of the stick, and an assurance from the minister that he was "a ruffian."

At last Heatherhead, having earned a half-penny, boldly went up to the counter of the fruiterer's in the square, and said, "A ha'-penny worth o' raisins. Whaur's Miss St. Clair?"

The fruiterer weighed out the raisins with much deliberation, silently put the half-penny in his till, and, looking fixedly at Heatherhead, observed,

"Nane o' yer impidence herè."

But Heatherhead, not to be discouraged, said, "Ye ken whaur she is; ye maun tell me."

"Gae awa wi' ye, ye deevil's bairn that ye are. It's only the like o' ye that cares to ask about her."

And the fruiterer—who had indeed been the instrument used in pressing on the "roup," and who had suffered a good deal of unpopularity on account of it among neighbors who did not propose to profit by it—frowned upon the boy.

"Gie me back my ha'-penny," said Heatherhead. "There's twa o' thae raisins rotten."

"If ye dinna get out o' my shop I'll bring the pleece tae ye."

"Gie me back my ha'-penny, then."

The fruiterer stepped abruptly among his baskets, and brought a pyramid of apples to the floor; Heatherhead picked up two of the rosiest and largest.

"Here's yer raisins tae ye. I'll keep thae."

But the apples were worth twopence.

"Haud ye, ye blackguard; here's your ha'-penny."

"Change ye for changie ye, then. Pit the ha'-penny doon there, and I'll pit the apples doon here," pointing to two neutral regions on the counter.

The fruiterer deposited the coin; the boy laid down the apples. It was not a remunerative transaction, but it consoled Heatherhead a little.

The boy had another source of consolation open to him. Though his parents were too poor to give him a jacket to his back, he was able to keep a gun. It was an old-fashioned fowling-piece, but it was in good enough condition to load and fire and kill.

Heatherhead kept his people in game, and though it was well known to the game-keepers round about the country that he indiscriminately shot whatever he had a mind to, in defiance of close times, they never could get a conviction against him. For one thing, Heatherhead was always too astute for them. And being openly chased, he was much too fleet of foot to be caught.

He had his gun hid behind a hedge the day of Bertha's "roup," and the thought was shaping itself in his mind that he would like to discharge it from the brae, over the roof of the house, at the auctioneer who was to sell the things. But he waited for some time, and seeing no purchasers come up the hill, he drew the missile from its hiding-place, went over the river, and by devious routes known to himself made across a great track of moorland.

The whole afternoon he lay in the dimple of a knoll overlooking a pool, where half a dozen wild-ducks were feeding. It was a pool in the heart of a wide expanse of heather; at the further side of it from where the boy lay there was a clump of wind-driven fir-trees. As he lay, the warm sun beat down upon him, and as he waited until caprice or the search for food brought the ducks down to him, he became like an inanimate portion of the scene. He had not been half an hour in his crouching attitude before a spider took for granted that he was a fixture, and spun a rope of silk between his head and a bough of heather; a variety of shining beetles crept curiously in the creases of his woolen shirt; a brown spotted butterfly hovered about him with the intention of alighting; and bees, their thighs thick with plunder, hummed over him undisturbed. Two or three times he had covered the birds with his fowling-piece, but they always turned without coming within range, and swam back toward the clump of fir-trees. The boy's vigilance never relaxed.

He meant to have some of them before night came. Once in the course of their feeding he knew they must make a circuit of the mere in his direction. Meanwhile there were compensations for him. He enjoyed the warm rays of the sun which beat about his head. Then between him and the blue vault there was such a caroling of larks that there was no lack of company. And when the ducks were decidedly out of range and resting, there were several little dramas close at hand to keep his attention engaged. The lizard on the stone at his right hand; the magpie carrying food to the nest in the fir-tree; the water-rats disporting themselves among the sedges—all required an eye to be given to them; not to speak of the fact

that Heatherhead had to keep his ears alert for the chance of a game-keeper's foot on the heath.

A crisis, however, occurred after he had lain in the knoll for two hours. The ducks were unmistakably getting within range. Heatherhead looked to his trigger, and with his cheek on the stock of the gun had a moment of intense and joyful expectation. They were under the leadership of a splendid drake, paddling straight within range. Another moment and he should have his patience rewarded. But no! They again turned, and what was that among the fir-trees? The figure of a woman.

The fowling-piece dropped from the boy's hand, and his heart beat more rapidly within him. A woman, yes! His dear mistress among the fir-trees, and now she is approaching the sedges, and the birds he has been watching all the afternoon swim toward her. They actually swim to her as if they had been bred in a farm-yard and were only out for a day's exercise.

Heatherhead continued watching, and Miss St. Clair, nearing the edge, threw morsels of bread to them. They were shy, but not afraid of her.

Having reassured himself that Miss St. Clair was before him, the boy turned on his back in the knoll and gave one loud shrill whoop of delight. The next moment he was bounding across the heather, and the wild-ducks were flying low over the water, while Bertha, surprised and dismayed, was shading her eyes from the sunlight and looking at him. Heatherhead went slowly toward her at the fir-trees. A smile was on his tanned face, which deepened into a grin as Bertha smiled and held out her hand.

"George, I am so glad to see you," she said, sweetly. Bertha was one of the few who had discovered that he had a Christian name.

Heatherhead blushed and muttered something inaudible. But he could not keep his eyes off her. The last time he had seen her she was pale and anxious and care-worn. Here she was now, the pallor changed to the gentlest flush of the rose. Nay, she was almost sunburnt, and the light in her large eyes was such as the boy had never remembered seeing before. There was even a deeper aureole of gold round her shining hair; and she walked from the sedges through the fir-trees, with a step so elastic, so strong, that Heatherhead could do nothing but keep on grinning.

"I was feared, mem, something had happened tae ye, or ye was aff for guid an' a'."

"And so I was, George, but I have changed my mind. I am coming back to Boulderstone again. And as soon as Captain Jansen returns I will come to town and open my school again in a new room. They have sold my things, I suppose?"

"There's naebody wad buy them, mem; there's naebody wad daur pit a hand on them."

"It is not so bad as I thought, then," said Bertha, partly to herself and partly to the boy.

"I have been living with Baikie's mother, George. If you come over the moor with me you can have some bannocks and milk and eggs. You would like that, wouldn't you?"

"I don't care, mem," answered Heatherhead, who was feasting

his eyes upon Bertha, and who, though he had eaten nothing but a handful of "sooracks" since early morning, did not at the moment feel the pangs of hunger. But they set off together from the water's edge, Heatherhead seeing the ducks settle down within a few yards of his fowling-piece as he followed his mistress to the turf-covered hut on the further side of the moor. Heatherhead's gun was not in favor with Bertha, so he did not mention it, trusting that he would find it on his return.

"You need say nothing of my being here to any one, George. I shall come back in good time: the quiet of this moor and Mrs. Baikie's kindness have made me quite strong again. Perhaps you would take a letter to Mr. Petersen for me, and— Is Sir Neil Dutton at the castle?"

"I could fin' oot, mem, and come back an' tell ye."

"But that is a great deal of trouble. It is seven whole miles from Boulderstone."

"What's seeven miles tae me? I'll come back an' tell ye the morn."

They were now on the edge of the moor, and the yellow thatch of the little sheeling where Bertha had taken refuge in her first sense of desertion and misery was before them.

"Come your ways ben," said Mrs. Baikie, a masculine old woman with a red handkerchief round her head, and bushy black eyebrows and eyes and a mustache of the same hue. "Hev I eggs? To be sure I hev eggs, mem, an' bannocks, an' milk tae. Sit doon, ye limb o' the deil. I've seen ye here afore."

And Heatherhead took his seat on a wooden stool, while Mrs. Baikie removed a large pot from a hook and chain which was swinging over the turf fire.

He made friends with a sheep-dog who had followed them in from the door, while Bertha went into an inner room and wrote her letter.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AT SANDSTONE HEAD.

MR. HEW BROCK sometimes spent an afternoon at the inn which fronted Sandstone harbor. He could always count upon some appreciative company in Mrs. Smith's bar parlor, or in the little room upstairs with the long square table and the row of wooden spittoons on the floor.

"Customs" Mackenzie, a government official, who had a boat, and who levied contributions of cakes of cavendish and glasses of schiedam from storm-stayed ships in the bay, under the impression that he was keeping off smugglers, was always to be commanded.

The harbor-master, in his furtive way, would look in when invited and hastily gulp a glass. The medical student in his fourth year at college, who assisted Dr. Dick at Boulderstone, affected the inn a good deal.

The light-house-keeper from Sandstone Head was oftener there than he should have been: and in the event of none of them being present, Mr. Brock found Mrs. Smith a person of latitudinarian

views, who could go great lengths in talk when the drinking was steady.

On the evening of the expected arrival of the "Petrel" from "the South" there was generally a pretty full house. In the uncarpeted parlors the Boulderstone carters who waited the arrival of the steamer drank quarts of beer. The little group of people who expected an uncle or a father, a son from school, or a parcel from the stewardess, went out and in from the pier to the bar, working up their geniality with "nips" before the "Petrel" came in sight.

On such a night Mr. Brock sat on one side of the fire in the bar-room, with Mr. Shearer of the light-house opposite him. There was some stir outside. The "Petrel" was in command of Captain Jansen, and Sir Neil Dutton was one of the passengers.

Various interesting questions were connected therewith.

Would Sir Neil Dutton come ashore sea-green with sickness? Would he make a speech in connection with the election at West-lands? Would Captain Jansen lay the "Petrel" alongside in the same masterly manner as Captain Brochie? And would he be likely to take a select circle of acquaintances into the saloon, and ask the steward to uncork a bottle?

Mr. Brock had come early in the afternoon to the inn, and Mr. Shearer had sat long in his company. They were both drinking to the satisfaction of Mrs. Smith. That is, they were not noisily ostentatious over their stoups. They always finished them with low expressions of surprise, as if some accident had overtaken the liquor and conveyed some of it away from their mouths when they were not looking. Shearer had made various efforts to rise and leave, but the bulky land-owner had always succeeded in pressing him into his chair.

"What the devil, man," he would say, gazing at his companion with swollen eyes which looked out of a congested face, "there's nothing to hurry you. It won't be dark for a couple of hours. Ye needn't waste good government oil. Damn ye, I'll report ye if you do!"

Shearer was only relieved from that importunate hospitality when the red head of Mr. Hew Brock sunk into his ulster, and he began to snore vigorously. He then stole out of the inn unobserved, and rather unsteadily made his way along the pathway which skirted the cliffs to the light-house. Part of the way he ran, as he saw that darkness was coming down from the north, and a storm might be expected.

There was only a lad at the light-house, and he had never allowed him to do more than trim the lamps and clean the brasses. The comrade who relieved him was temporarily on duty at another headland where a death had occurred. In the desperation of his haste Shearer narrowly escaped precipitating himself over the cliffs after he realized it might be dark before he arrived. He only arrested his steps when a red glow of light burst from the headland and settled upon the bay.

The boy had lit the lamps and the credit of the light-house keeper was safe.

He stopped his mad race, went leisurely forward, and wrought himself into a fit of indignation at the impertinence of the cleaner

who had dared to light up before his arrival. In half an hour from the time he had left the inn he had sent the boy to his bed under the conviction that he had done something which deserved dismissal, but which, owing to his (Shearer's) lenient disposition, would probably not be reported against him.

A few minutes later he sat in the lamp-room, beneath the glass dome, some hundreds of feet above the sea, and a storm was roaring without. To Shearer a storm was only one of the natural incidents of his profession. He heard the boom of the waves beneath, and then became conscious from time to time that a paler, bluer, more intense light was fitfully flashing outside than his own lamp shed on the sea; but it hardly disturbed him at all.

As the seventh and strongest wave of each series burst against the crags, hurling cataracts of water along the side of the light-house, and surrounding the dome with flashes of spray, shaking the machinery and the floor, and making the round walls vibrate, he sat at his task with quiet unconcern. It was a much more serious thing for him that the light had been a few minutes late, and that thirty miles of the public might have commented on it. But for that smart boy whom he had abused and sent to bed he might really have got into difficulties. The storm, therefore, had at first rather a soothing effect upon him; he at least was safe at his post. Ships might be beating in from the horizon in all stages of distress to get to the shore side of the red light and safe anchorage. Shearer did not as much as think of them. Only, now that he was seated beside his apparatus, he began to reflect that Mr. Hew Brock might bear him a grudge for the way in which he had left him at the inn; and as Mr. Brock was a county authority it might mean some mischief to him later on. He would go over to Lobster Keep in the morning and attempt to pacify the great man.

In the midst of the storm, in spite of its deafening roar, the light-house keeper became awake that there was a foot upon the lower rounds of the iron staircase which led to his room. It might be some hundred steps down, but the door of the room beneath the dome, where the lamp was shining, was open, and he could not mistake the sound as it came up through the tubular winding. Undoubtedly there was an iron heel moving up the grating. Walking to the door he bent his ear and listened.

"Shearer! Shearer!" shouted a voice.

It was the land-owner.

"Here I am, sir. Wait a minute till I bring a light. God's sake, sir, hold on; there's a door slack in the hinges down there, and if ye lean on it ye will be over the rock, before ye know where ye are."

With a small lamp in his hand the keeper then moved down the winding stair until he had reached the turn from which the voice proceeded.

Mr. Brock was on his hands and knees, and as he lifted his head to look at the keeper the blood streamed from beneath his hair.

"You're cut, sir," said Shearer. But the only answer he got was a mouthful of profane garbage directed at him from the steps where the land-owner lay.

"Follow me, sir, to the lamp-room, and I'll get that wound looked to."

At this appeal Mr. Brock struggled to his feet, panting and angry, and climbed to the room beneath the dome.

"You've been wonderfully preserved, sir," remarked Shearer, in a disturbed manner.

As he looked at the sanguinary visage of the man before him he seemed to feel for the first time that there were giant powers raging outside his turret which might at any moment pick him and his lamp off the projection and cast them through space into the angry sea. Anything, he thought, might happen after such a visitation. And as the men looked at each other the storm seemed to shake the light-house to its foundation. As it howled round the dome they could feel that the light-house was swaying to the wind like a tree. And lurid flashes of red lightning now flamed around them, and the lamp burned as if it were a shadow.

A flock of sea-birds, driven off the water, shrieked round the light, and were cast like stones against the outer glass. It sounded like the beginning of ruin. It was followed by the rushing of water and the tumbling of pebbles. Then there was a lull.

Shearer felt a strange inclination to pray. Brock relieved himself by some exclamatory and descriptive oaths.

"Whisht, wisht, sir," said the keeper, who now seemed genuinely alarmed, stooping to a bucket with a handful of "waste," and approaching to remove the blood from his visitor's brow. "What in the world, sir, brought you here?"

"Why did I come here? Because, as a justice of the peace, I felt myself bound to see that there was a light kept burning. That's why."

Shearer was alarmed at the attitude of his guest; he invited him to sit by the stove, hung his coat on a peg, and made him as comfortable as he could under the circumstances.

"Have ye a kettle?" asked the justice of the peace.

Shearer had no kettle, but he had tin coffee-cups and a box of biscuits. Yet he could make coffee in a few minutes. But the great man could do better than that, he said, if the light-house keeper would put his hand in the pocket of his ulster. Shearer did so, and drew out a quart bottle of whiskey.

"The Petrel's in the bay," said Mr. Brock, "but she'll have to lie out till the morning. The harbor's under water. I wish Sir Neil Dutton joy of his quarters."

"Man alive! is she in the bay, say ye?" uncorking the whisky and filling up the cups with raw spirits.

The wound was not difficult to treat. In coming round from Sandstone Mr. Brock had stumbled frequently, once upon his head. Why he had not stumbled over the cliff only the Providence which takes care of the drunken man knows.

The keeper made haste to lead off the drinking, because he felt that the sooner the justice of peace went to sleep the better for him. So, while the storm roared round them, they made themselves as comfortable as if they had been back in the inn parlor. Both men handled their cups with an object in view—Shearer because he dis-

liked a spy in his room, Brock because he saw his way to disposing of Sir Neil Dutton.

The object was to send each other asleep. Having drained one cup, however, the light-house keeper began to change his point of view. He saw before him a hospitable justice of peace who had a surveillance over the machinery and the lamp and his conduct to boot. Why should not he shut his eyes and slumber a little while this man watched? Mr. Brock replenished the cups once more; the keeper tasted, and shutting his eyes he heard the storm as a pleasant wild dream, which only increased his personal comfort.

Brock was watching him narrowly from the other side of the stove. He shut and opened his eyes several times, drank again, seeing through a mist the red face of his visitor. Then he muttered something as the cup fell from his hands. He was asleep.

Brock waited patiently for some moments; there was no doubt about it; he was asleep. Rising from his chair Brock bent over the machinery and pressed his finger upon a button of ivory. The glass dome above him was immediately wrapped in darkness; only by the dim flickering of a hand-lamp in a corner did Brock see the pale, sleeping face of his companion. And into the Bay of Boulderstone the North Sea flung its crested waves, and there was no light between them and the quenched stars.

Some hours later Brock heard a cannon firing through the storm, and he knew that he had succeeded in sending the "Petrel" on the rocks.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WRECK OF THE "PETREL."

THE wind roared over Boulderstone as it drew on to midnight, and the ears of the sleepless heard the voice of the sea get loud and ever louder through the night watches. It seemed as if the North Sea were concentrating all its passionate fury on the little town. At one time fiery figures of seven would shoot down the horizon, and the valley would be filled with the crack and peal of thunder, shaken out of clouds which had been swept across the white and tumbling abysses of the bay.

Then the wind would come in and assail with a shriek and whistle every cranny of the great square, each lane of the foreshore, the river-edge, and the winding streets of the Brown Hill, and with each new gust there were tossed off the roofs chimneys which fell in fragments beneath, and slates which were whirled with a jingling crack into neighboring windows. Foam, churned into sheets and wreaths, hovered and flew over the town, and settling, trickled in salt streams from the roofs and walls of the most inland houses.

A permanent atmosphere of blinding spray circled the shore like a thick fringe, and at regular intervals a white surge rose over the parish church and shook the belfry.

The bell rang out through the din, and it was known to the old inhabitants that the inevitable signal being given, there would be dead faces to be turned among the driven sea-weed on the morrow.

The first note of the bell was ever the summons for a gathering of

fishermen at the Brae-head. It was a little past midnight when it first resounded. All the fires had long been out, and the doors were shut for the night; but a few minutes after the first peal a figure clad in a yellow oil-skin stood at the door of an entry opposite the churchyard. Bending his head, and, as it were, diving through the whirling wind, the figure made off to the Brae-head, being sometimes beaten to the house walls, sometimes cast into the road. It was Faither Dykes, still the most alert, spite of his age, and by the time he had taken his place on the eastern outlook of the little promontory the clang of the bell had roused all who were to come. One by one from the doorways the sou'-westered inhabitants made their exits, rolling through the drenching mists of the sea, the tiles flying round their heads, and in half an hour the brae had its crowd of observers. On the town side of the promontory the Whale's Head had its seaward windows lit, and the landlord had built up a great fire in the kitchen, and put water in his boiler, and tried the tap of the spirit-cask. He had lived long enough in Boulderstone to know that out of the hurly-burly there might at any moment be brought a company of sailors half dead with sea-water, and in want of all the restoratives he could offer. Indeed a storm had often been a most lucrative night's work for him, and if he was not always repaid for the trouble of lighting up, he always solaced himself by extra drams.

"I havena heard the kirk-bell gang like that for fifty years," said one black shadow in the lea of the outlook at the Brae-head to the group of shadows who clustered round it. And the bell rang out as the speaker—Faither Dykes—talked, peal after peal of muffled sound. The notes came shivering down the wind to the Brae-head, and as they passed to the east in the storm some of the fishermen trembled as if a spirit had gone by them.

"Hearken til't," said another voice out of the blackness, as the metallic clangor continued. "The auld kirk maun be maistly under spree-watter. It's watter that's drivin' the tongue o' the bell; ye can tell that by the soond o't. It's gaun to be another heigh tide."

"I wish there be nae hand on the rope but the win' an' the watter," said a low, bass voice.

"Whatna haun', ye fule?"

"A wat ye ken fine that there's speerits eneuch i' the auld kirk-yard tae ring a' the bells o' the coonty."

"Whisht, man! Jack Tamson, ye suldna say the like o' that." And the men pressed shoulder to shoulder, like a flock of sheep, nearer the shelter of the outlook, not a man of them without a tremor at his heart, while the bell still tolled and the notes went sobbing down the wind.

"I've heerd ma faither say that a nicht like this there wis a deed man's cry in every ring," continued the bass voice from the outside edge of the group, and his companions pressed still nearer to one another.

Then there was a long silence among them, and the only light which broke the darkness of the midnight was the massive changing whiteness of the shore where great rollers were chasing each other up the beach. A sheet of flames sometimes tore along the crests of the waves, and made the darkness more intense than it was before.

And still the church-bell sent up its voice to join the tumult. In one of the lulls which followed, Faither Dykes was heard to say,

"I've lost coont o' Sandstone licht for the last twenty minutes. It canna be slockened."

"Slockened—na. It couldna be slockened if the licht-hoose be na ower the rock. Shearer's a skeely man wi' the lamp."

"It's the fog an' the spray that blinds your een, faither."

"There's naething blinds my een," said Faither Dykes. "Daum me, if I dinna think the licht's oot."

And every eye was turned to Sandstone Head.

"The licht canna be oot," said one and another of them, though nothing was shining on the waves save the blue and red flashes of the lightning.

"It'll gang hard wi' John Jansen the nicht if he disna tak' the North Sea wi' the steamboat," said another voice.

"It'll gang hard wi' him whether or no if there's onything in my faither's story o' that bell. Hearken til't! hearken til't!"

"Ne'er min' the bell," interrupted Faither Dykes. "If the licht's oot we maun show a signal tae keep the steamer aff the bar. If he disna see a shore licht at a' naething 'll hinder 'm frae takin' the rocks. A tar-barrel, lads, as quick's ye can. Awa ye go. Bring half a dizzen if ye can get them." And the old man pushed the crowd that was leaning up to the shelter of the outlook, and several figures disappeared in the direction of the Whale's Head.

"Whisht! whisht!" said Faither Dykes to the group which remained. "What's that? Anither bell. It's frae the sea."

And sure enough over the waves came the tones of another bell, not so deep as that booming from the church tower, not so fitful, but a bell rung rapidly and sternly, as if by the hand of some desperate man.

"It's the 'Petrel's' bell. I ken it fine. And, my God! she maun be within a hunner yairds o' the bar. He's lost his reckonin' i' the bay, and come ower-fast east."

"God have mercy on them!" called out Faither Dykes. "See to that—see, see! it's the 'Petrel,' an' she's at the bar. He's tryin' to tak' the river. Oh, God, have mercy on them! God have mercy—"

The blackness of the bay had yawned into momentary light, and the steamer, laboring heavily, loomed into view. Every man saw her, and the next moment she was among the breakers. She had no sooner struck than a gun fired, and then another, and another.

"Haud awa tae the shore, lads!" cried Faither Dykes. "Get oot the boat."

At that moment there was shouting on the path of the outlook, and two barrels were roiled on to the promontory.

"Three o' ye licht up. The rest o' ye come doon tae the shore and launch."

But just then the black pall which hung over the bay began to lift. The outlines of the river rushing to the sea—brown, deep, and swollen—were visible to the fishermen. The turrets of the castle began to show in the east, and far off Dutton Head, wrapped in foam and mist and spray, raised a visible shoulder to the sea.

And there, not a hundred yards off, lay the "Petrel," the waves breaking over her. She had gone ashore on the stormiest part of the

coast, and all the waves were laden with kegs, boxes, barrels, and packages, washed from the deck and out of the hold.

"Launch, I tell ye!" cried Faither Dkyes, who led the fishermen down the beach to the river's edge.

"It's perfect madness, faither; there's no boat wad live i' that sea."

"Wha'll gang wi' me?" shouted the old man.

"Me," said a boy without a jacket, recognizable in the morning light as Heatherhead.

"There's nane o' ye ill gang oot i' that sea," shrieked a woman's voice, while the owner of it pushed her way into the crowd, her disheveled hair floating behind her.

"Launch, I tell ye; I'm gaun oot," said Faither Dykes.

"Ye gang oot, ye feckless, dottled auld body! And wull the rest o' ye staun roond and glower and glower, and lat him go?" continued the woman.

The boat was launched; Faither Dykes at the tiller. Heatherhead held the sheet of a small jib, which was all the sail that dare be hoisted; four fishermen had silently taken the oars. And thus they shot out upon the swollen stream.

The darkness parted, and let the light of a dingy dawn in upon the scene.

Shortly the Brae-head was crowded with spectators, and before the sun had shed its first rays upon the sea, river, and town a stream of men, women, and children were struggling down through the wind to the shore. There lay the "Petrel" on the rocks of the bar, only visible at intervals, her masts and funnel gone, her glistening decks swept of everything, the tide bringing them in to the beach on the crests of broken and boiling waves.

From the Brae-head the air was rent with cries.

A woman on her knees, surrounded by the wives of the men who were at the oars in the boat, prayed in a loud hysterical voice.

The dead bodies were beginning to come in. From a heap of tangle the boatswain and mate were pulled out and carried away, both sadly mangled by the rocks. Then an unknown female body rolled up the shingle, and a wave stronger than its predecessors laid Captain Jansen's remains at their feet.

"Ay—it micht weel toll the haele nicht throe," murmured a fisherman in whose ear the church-bell was still sounding, as he bent down and fastened his hand in the collar of the thick pilot-coat.

Jansen's face was as untroubled and serene as it was in life. As they bore him up the Brae-head through the weeping crowd he might have been asleep.

"Bring him hame," said a gaunt, pale woman, without a tear in her eye or a tremor in her voice. It was Jean Scott, who walked in the stateliness of her grief at her master's feet.

Meanwhile, surrounded by floating timber, and with no hope of living in the sea beyond the bar, the boat had turned, and was drawing toward the east side of the river. It was the only beach on which it could land. Their endeavor had been a failure. Toward the boat a group from the castle, which had been standing since dawn on the shingle, moved down. The capitalist was there. He was haggard and unshaven, and ail the resolution had left his face.

The resources he had at command were powerless on that stormy shore. Nothing suggested itself to his mind. He was cowed and silent as the keel of the boat tore up the sand, and the men leaping out lifted Faither Dykes, drenched but resolute, from his seat at the tiller.

"You've saved nothing," said Mr. Frazer, looking into the boat when it had been hauled high and dry out of reach of the waves.

"Ay, this;" and Heatherhead handed him a dressing-case, with a plate and the name of Sir Neil Dutton on it. He read the name and moved away to the castle. Then he turned back, and said, quietly,

"Fifty pounds to the man who finds Sir Neil's remains."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN THE WINE-CELLAR.

THE evening after the wreck there was nothing to indicate that a storm had shaken heaven and the sea, except the wall of tangles thrown on the beach. The sea was still heaving and surging, but the wind had ceased to howl—its passion was spent.

Various corners of Boulderstone had their groups of men talking in a low, subdued whisper to each other.

The calamity might have been read in the face of the least concerned inhabitant. Every man walked as if he were in training for a funeral; even the boys had ceased to play and laugh, and hung outside the group of their seniors listening, with their mouths open and their hands in repose.

As Rab Peat, the ferry-man and grave-digger, proceeded through the square that evening, he was gazed upon with unusual emotion. And as he went soberly up toward the town-bridge, attired in a swallow-tail coat, which had once adorned the broad back of the parish minister, and which might have held three of its present occupant, with room to spare, he felt that circumstances had conferred on him the sudden distinction of being a leading inhabitant. To be recognized by Rab that evening as he passed the saddened loungers was felt to be an honor. But the grave-digger was sparing in his recognitions; he merely glanced with the tail of his eye over the wisp of linen which surrounded his neck, and gave a slight jerk to any one who solicited his attention. Yet it was deemed sufficient. With so many graves on his mind, no one was so rational as to suppose that Rab could condescend upon the minor courtesies.

In half an hour the grave-digger was standing at the hall-door of the castle. He had looked up at the windows with some admiration. Every window had its blind down; from the large ones on the ground-floor to the uppermost slit of a window beyond reach of the last tendrils of the ivy there was nothing to be seen but calico. Outside the castle, too, there was nothing to break the propriety of the situation to Rab's mind. A stag-hound was indeed visible in the door-way, but he walked off with his tail suitably inserted between his legs. Nor was there a sound to break the solemn stillness. It was so still that the grave-digger had his hand on the bell three

minutes before he could bring himself to draw the wire gently. At last he drew it without ringing, and looking through the glass doors he saw himself invited from the inner room by the wagging of a finger which belonged to Mr. M'Callum, the butler, whose round, red, and perturbed countenance by and by became visible.

Gently letting himself through the intervening doors, Rab stepped on tiptoe across the hall, and, at the heels of M'Callum, disappeared toward the old and Gothic seclusion of the castle.

They met no one as they noiselessly threaded their way through the gloom, and descended a flight of steps hewn from the rock, and stopped at a door, stanchioned with iron, from the lock of which a bunch of keys was hanging:

Rab's nostrils dilated at the door-way; it was already open, and drawing a long breath he entered with a voluminous sigh. Once inside the wine-cellars, the fumes of the various vintages greeted him, and Rab, spite of the solemnity of the occasion, was obliged to exclaim, "This is deleeshus."

M'Callum, with an injunction that the grave-digger was to look after his head and his shins, led the way within the subterranean passage, and his companion eyed the casks and the bottle-racks with much internal respect. His mind was so entirely occupied by the encouraging odor of wine that when M'Callum motioned him to a stool at the base of a claret cask, on the summit of which a candle was burning, and himself took a seat in an opposite recess in the wall, Rab was surprised to see his friend burying his face in a napkin, and making a noise like that of weeping. The grave-digger had been too long in active contact with ultimate problems to be a weeper. He therefore sat and looked at the butler a little contemptuously as he continued to bury his face in the napkin.

"There's nae word o' the corp," said Rab, at length, with all the directness of one of his own shovels at a filling in. M'Callum laid aside the napkin, and revealed a face whose eyes were swollen with blubbering.

"Oh, man, Rab, can ye no' pit it gentler?" said the butler, who was an early school-fellow of the grave-digger, but who had been much about the world, and had even attained the English dialect, though he did not use it on this occasion. But Rab was suffering from a disappointment; and the red eyes of the butler, inflamed as he judged by more than natural grief, had an irritating effect.

"Ye canna ca' him onything ither noo," he continued, "and the corp hasna been gotten."

M'Callum rose with a deep sigh, and disappearing among the racks, returned with a couple of bottles.

The grave-digger stood up and put aside his swallow-tail, as one who recognized that important business was to be done.

In his shirt-sleeves he seemed the merest skeleton of a man; so loosely did even his linen and breeches hang about him, he looked as if he were a temporary make-shift of bones and ligament. M'Callum required to look at the round, massive chin of his friend and the piercing eyes to reconcile himself to the change.

"It's nane o' that fushionless soor milk, I houp?" said Rab, critically, as his friend approached with the bottles, handling them like infants at a christening.

"Oor claret's a' in casks," replied the butler, uncorking. "An' it's no' a wine to turn your nose up at, Rab. For whatever you an' I may agree in saying derogatory to Frazer, we can say naething against his wine. To my certain knowledge there's never been a cellar in Boulderstone Castle that for variety and price could be compared to what we're sittin' i' the midst of noo. Frazer may be low in his views—he is low; but he has a high standard for his wine. It would maybe surprise ye to be told that there's £4,000 in the cellar at this moment, all introduced within the month."

"It'll be a braw funeral," said Rab, emptying a tumbler of costly port and surveying his friend as he leaned back in the dusky recess.

"Robert, I had great expectations from the young gentleman. I built upon him. I saw that the fortunes o' the family were to be raised to a great point by him. And I was busy educating him for his position. Not to speak of either matters, I had improved him in the matter of wine. He was beginning to abandon the thin, old vintages of the Rhine, and to patronize this," holding up the port. "He wad have been a credit to us a'. And to think o' him at this moment! It's ower much—I canna stand it. I canna indeed."

And the butler again had recourse to his handkerchief.

"Ye havena made up yer mind aboot the coffin, M'Callum? Take my word for't, Sandy Harold is the man for the job. Ye'll have to exerceese yer influence wi' Frazer tae get the coffin into Sandy's hands."

"Oh, Robert, ye harrow my feelin's mair than I can tell."

"Sandy has kisted the gentry for thretty years, and this verra day he took me throo his wood-yaird, and showed me aik that there's no the marrow to in the hale toon. An' his mountin's an' handles is just beautifu'. Sandy kens his bizniz. Says he to me, 'I ken the baronet's measurement to the breadth o' my nail.' For Sandy wasna sure but he wad get the job afore lang, though the sea hadna taen him. Whaur Sandy got his measurement I canna say; but i' the kirk he's gae busy wi' his een whaun the minister's preachin'. Ye'll mind what I say to ye, M'Callum. I can conscientiously recommend Sandy's coffins."

"Man, Rab, you're makin' my flesh creep."

"They're water-ticht an' worm-proof," continued the grave-digger, reflectively, clasping his tumbler with both his hands, "an' I dinna recommend them for ony self-seekin' reason: they gie me trouble eneuch, for a coffin o' Sandy's is just like the foondation-stane o' a hoose. Nicholson's boxes, and Smith's and Cooper's and Broon's fa' tae pieces in nae time. A hale country-side an' generation gets confoonded thegither in twa three year under their trate-ment. But there's auld George Waters, o' Bower; he's a kind o' immortal in his grave, because Sandy kisted him. An' there's Daddy Sinclair, o' Giese, an' John Davidson, o' Glengolly—roond an' roond them kists hae faun tae pieces, and Sandy's handiwork stauns. It's a kind o' nooshance tae me, for it hinders me i' the diggin'; only I canna but respec' Sandy. It's no self-seekin', for ye ken the baronet's coffin wad be puttin' i' the vaults, whaur there's nae spade-wark at a'."

"Robert, speak aboot him livin' and no' aboot him deed. I dinna like this matter-o'-factness o' yours. Your occupation mak's

ye think ower muckle o' the cauld clay. You're stronger on your legs than me, Robert; just gang ben there, an' reach doon twa three bottles—the mooldier an' dirtier i' the ootside the better tae the taste."

"Anither o' the same," said the grave-digger, returning and resuming his seat at the foot of the cask with a suddenness which suggested that he had been pulled down from behind. M'Callum gave him the corkscrew, but he fumbled with it without making any impression on the seal. M'Callum did not offer to help him, though he eyed him solemnly as he pursued his task.

"A bit knock on the neck 'll put that richt," observed Rab, dropping the screw and breaking the neck of the bottle upon the edged of a cask. "It's wasterfu', but there's nae ither way for't," he murmured, filling the butler's tumbler and his own.

"I'm kin' o' sorry, M'Callum, for the mither, an' the sweethert too."

"Man," said M'Callum, hiccupping and finding his words slowly, "ye needna. Sweethert's no' carin'. Fac's deeth. No' carin'—that!" And the butler made an ineffectual effort to snap the thumb of his right hand. "Aff wi' the auld love, on wi' the new. Jean—a bonny lassie, Robert—Jean tell't me—Jean, the maid, ye ken—aff wi' the auld love, on wi' the new."

"Whatna new?" asked the grave-digger, gazing with astonishment at his companion's sudden want of control over his speech.

"Brock o' the Keep," answered the butler, pronouncing it, "rok-ckoeep," and showing a disposition to be drowsy.

"Is there naething lighter than this stuff?" asked Rab, alluding to the port, and fearing an untimely end to the interview. "I'll awa' ben an' see."

Presently he disappeared in the dark, and returned with two unfamiliar bottles, taken from a case.

"Thae's licht drinkin', Robert," said the butler, recovering himself. "Just knock aff the heeds."

Rab turned one of the bottles round and round with an affectation of perusing the label, and fell to exclaiming, "A braw funeral, a braw funeral. Rodderer! I never min' o' tastin' Rodderer afore. It's a wersh, windy sort o' stuff—ye'll be the better o't, M'Callum."

"It's dance drink," said the butler, stopping short in the midst of his draught—"it's sacrilege tae be at it in a time o' grief. I'm awa' tae yon toon for a wee, Robert. Put a licht tae the wick o' the lamp abune yer head an' 'wauken me in half an hour."

"Aweel," said the grave-digger, lighting the lamp and resuming his seat on his stool.

The lamp gave but a feeble light; but it was more than sufficient for the patient Robert. He was in no hurry. His quarters were perfectly to his mind. So he folded his arms across his lean bosom and bent his head, determined to wait the wakening of his companion.

How long he slept himself he could not say, but he did sleep. A twinge of pain in his shoulder, and a cold current of air in the back of his neck, were the first intimations that he must have slept some time. When he opened his eyes the butler's round, red countenance was the first object upon which he looked. The butler was trump-

eting through his nose in a way that made the subterranean passages echo again.

Robert was looking at him fixedly when his ears caught, as he supposed, the sound of a footstep approaching from the unlocked door of the cellars. He turned his eyes in that direction and strained them in the darkness. There was unquestionably a footstep.

Robert stretched across and kicked the butler; he only groaned and trumpeted the louder. The footstep still approached; then it stopped, and the grave-digger saw something which, with all his experience, surprised him.

Sir Neil Dutton was standing in the gloom; he had a whip in his hand; he was dressed as if he had been on horseback, and there were spots of mud on his clothes. Robert's jaws moved against each other; materialist as his profession had made him, he knew no spell to exorcise the wandering spirits of the dead.

Then Sir Neil Dutton, looking down at him, observed,

"You seem to have been improving your time. I hope you have found everything to your mind." It was not an angry spirit at all events; that was so far satisfactory; but Robert's teeth chattered, and he looked helplessly from the broken and empty bottles to the face of the spirit. "I suppose, my lean friend, that pleasant old gentleman in the recess is the remains of my butler. He seems to have no anxieties in life. He enjoys most excellent repose;" and the spirit receded a step into the gloom.

"I've been thirty-seven years in the tred, and I've kent plenty o' corpses that had gude gude raisins for takin' an airin', but it's the first I ever set een on. It's no a weel-regulated corp at a'. It's no a weel-informed corp. It thinks M'Callum's deed. An' him playin' 'Maggie Lauder' there through his nose."

"Don't mind me," said Sir Neil Dutton, retiring into the darkness.

"It's a polite corp ony way," said the dazed grave-digger, leaning across and shaking his comrade by the knees.

The butler opened his eyes and looked upon as white a little old man as there was in Christendom at that hour.

"I've seen his ghaist, M'Callum," he shivered. "An' I've been seeven-an'-thirty year in the tred, an' never saw tne like o't afore."

At that moment the turning of the key in the cellar door apprised them of the fact that this particular ghost had some power over the tougher substances to which he applied his fingers.

CHAPTER XL.

ROUTING THEM OUT.

It had long been shrewdly suspected at Sandstone that Magnus would have to pay for the luxury of felling the laird. Some of the gossips even went the length of saying that "he needn't have been so particular." But then he had only been married a few months at the time, and was still in a silly and devoted condition of mind.

When three months passed, however, and only one allusion had been made to the transaction, and Mr. Brock never appeared again, it began to be forgotten that he received so callous a return for his

effusive behavior. The allusion had been, it is true, a sheriff's officer's visit announcing that, after rent day, every man, woman, and child must be off the estate; but the little community settled down to its work again, and took no thought about it.

He might as well have posted a notice at low-water mark to warn the oysters and bivalves in general that they must drop their shells and go with the waves elsewhere. Sandstone comprehended the notice to quit so badly that it hardly discussed it.

But there came a morning when all the male population of Sandstone was called to the headland. A ship had been drawn by the tide within a hundred yards of the cliffs. It required the united seamanship of the hamlet to correct the ship-master's mistake, and to take her off with all sails set to the horizon.

After the day's work the boats were racing in from the North Sea as hard as a mild wind would propel them. Magnus's craft led, and the exhausted crews, silently looking forward to their evening's smoke beside the peat fires, spoke not a word to one another.

Suddenly Magnus shifted his seat at his tiller, and said, half to himself, half to his crew,

"Good God! what's going on at the cliff?"

Every eye looked upward. Darkness was gathering among the crags, but there was a cloud of smoke hanging about their summits.

"The bairns have been burnin' the whins," suggested an oracular voice from the prow.

"Maybe," said Magnus, "but we'll have to give the wind a hand. Out wi' the oars, boys."

When the boats touched the quay, and the men pushed their heads above the cliff, the smoke explained itself.

Two cottage roofs were a mass of flames. The silly thatch crackled and blazed as if it enjoyed itself. They were the only roofs which remained—Magnus's house had nothing but three walls left.

The fishermen-farmers stood bewildered. What had happened to them? They had gone down in the morning to the sea, the younger ones kissing their wives just as if they had been the heroes of an old song, and the seniors breathing kindly threats to the children as a bond for their good behavior during the day.

But the wives and the youngsters, where were they? Ah, there they were, a whole group of them, they and their bits of furniture together—wooden stools, infants, heaps of crockery, cradles, and beds jumbled all together.

"In God's name, what does this mean?" cried old Daddy Findhorn, as the men advanced in bewilderment. The burning thatch collapsed and the falling beams scattered a shower of sparks around.

There was a rush of small children, a clinging to the knees of the fathers and brothers, and a cry rent the air which the sea itself and all the melancholy tribe of rock-birds could not have rendered in more sorrowful tones. Presently each man betook himself to his own cot and patch of land. Magnus's young wife, hanging on his arm, drew him off to the spot which was to have been their home for life. It had only been a brown, yellow-thatched affair at best. But it was the mansion of the hamlet for all that. While the rest

of the villagers were content that their peat smoke should ascend from the middle of the floor through a hole in the roof, Magnus had inserted a cabin stove, that the tide had washed ashore for him, in the side of his chief room. His pilot-fees had often been supplemented by small gifts from merchant-captains—coral from the South Seas, monster shells from the West Indies, and a skin or two from Greenland. Magnus's wife had a cow, and she gave the cow an out-house for herself, whereas her neighbors were content with a partition over which the animal's horns would show themselves to the family in the kitchen.

As the pair looked in upon the home which had been their pride, which had been Magnus's father's and father's father's before him—they there saw but a confused heap of straw and turf. One wall was flat with the ground, and on the other the crockery still glanced as Marion had shelved it.

Magnus's face darkened, and his hand gripped his wife's hand as he surveyed the work of destruction.

"Brock and a band o' men have been here a' day," sobbed Marion, "an' the police wi' them. We durna say a word. There's whaur we can gang tae." And she pointed to tall posters which had been stuck round the walls announcing in large letters that to "Brisbane, Brisbane, Brisbane" there would be free and assisted passages; that in "Brisbane, Brisbane, Brisbane" there was land for all who cared to take it, and that fortunes were always made by everybody who went to "Brisbane, Brisbane, Brisbane."

The posters were of course the work of Mr. Frazer. He had got Brock to further his emigration scheme, believing that if one half of Sandstone were sent adrift by force the other half would follow of its own accord. He had arranged it so that the full force of any indignation that was going should descend upon Brock, while all the advantage of the scheme should accrue to himself. In shifting the laborers from the foreshore to the temporary sheds at the inland quarries, he had already been so much threatened with violence and death that he had no mind to incur any new antipathy. It had been easy for him to induce Brock to proceed with eviction, and he promised himself that the community would be thoroughly prepared for his offers of help. Having made up his mind about the transaction, he saw no obstacles in the way. He desired them to go to Brisbane. It would remunerate him if they went to Brisbane. To Brisbane, therefore, the whole hamlet should go.

"To hell wi' Brisbane!" shouted the pilot, riving a poster from the wall and leaping among the turf and straw, where, with a kind of insane energy, he began to clear a space.

"Your gun's no' there, Magnus," said Marion, plaintively, as she watched him reaching his arm into the space he had cleared. "The police took it awa' with them," and in her heart she was thankful it was so.

"The hoose is my ain and the land's my ain. It's mine mair than the keep's his. Never greet, lass, I'll pay him oot for this," replied the crazed and violent husband.

That night a skyful of stars looked down upon the ruined huts, and the noise of the sea tumbling among the further crags was the lullaby to the slumbering of the children gathered beneath a tarpau-

lin, which their sleepless mothers watched. And the men sat round a peat fire, vowing that they would never leave the cliff.

But ages ago the waves had tunneled the cliffs between Sandstone and the town, and left long echoing passages where the wild pigeons flew in and out. On the blanched sands at the mouth of these the people sometimes picked off a seal before he had time to seek the sea, and there were days when an otter might be seen making lonely banquet on a codfish with which he had emerged from the bay.

Into one of these caves, for the present, they determined to go, a child having died from the exposure of the night-time. They took the driest they could get, and divided among them the little tortuosities and corners, and trimmed their lamps in them; and the seals and otters, scenting their presence from afar, came no more ashore at that point.

They would remain there, they said, until they roofed their houses again. Meantime they made trips to Boulderstone for thatch, and began to clothe the dead walls with timber. They meant soon to exchange the caves for the hamlet again.

But one evening two lads never returned, and as Magnus went up the cliff next day to put the finishing touch to his thatch, he was met by three county policemen who had just fixed a trespass-board warning the evicted that they would be liable to prosecution. Magnus was told that two of the lads had been taken to prison already.

"Have they?" said he, plucking the board and the plank from the earth, and raising it for a blow. And that night, too, Magnus was lodged in the Boulderstone jail.

CHAPTER XLI.

ALIVE.

SIR NEIL DUTTON had not taken the sea-passage he originally intended to the North, though he had gone so far as to put his luggage on board the "Petrel." He had been detained in Edinburgh after the election at Westlands, and his appearance in his own wine-cellar is to be explained without any reference to the world of disembodied souls.

Having ridden across from Humster the night after the wreck, and having arrived at the castle late, he had visited the cellar because of the sounds which traveled up from them in consequence of the vigor of M'Callum's slumbers. He suspected that he had come back at a time when he was supposed to be dead, from the dumfounded expression of the one man he could see about the stables, to which he led his horse, and whom he cautioned to say nothing to any one until he had announced himself. The short interview with the curious old man at the foot of the barrel confirmed his suspicions. And as he wandered from room to room, after locking the cellar door to avoid the scandal of two bibulous old retainers being at large, he was at a loss how to report himself.

He had as yet no idea how far the surprise of his death had been attended by grief, and he hardly knew whether there would be any

risk of reaction by sudden disclosure of himself. He remembered that the medical treatment recommended to his mother was a system of shocks, but he shrunk from adding his arrival to the list of cures.

Would Mr. Frazer and Caroline be very much put about by his supposed death? He sincerely hoped they would, for in riding home he had again told himself that it would be best for them, for himself, and for Boulderstone, in the long run, if warmer relations were established between them.

Sir Neil had been a good deal knocked about at Westlands. He had never heard himself so frankly discussed before; and though many kind things had been written and said of him, the impression which was uppermost in his mind was that of "audacious puppy," "ill-informed turncoat," "a promising boy who would yet learn not to thrust himself in where angels feared to tread"—the angels in this instance being a couple of fat iron-masters whose bashfulness overcame their public spirit—and other phrases and epithets of a similar character cast at him from the platform and newspapers of Westlands. Above all, he had been sent away from the borough unelected. His opponent, standing in the Conservative interest, by a slight majority had been returned to Parliament; and in addition to the mortification of defeat, Sir Neil had been frankly told that it a man of more experience and weight had gone forward in the Liberal interest the catastrophe would have been avoided. The stormy fortnight he had spent in electioneering had rather softened him toward Mr. Frazer. A little experience of what men considered themselves entitled to say and do in the interests of party made him feel that, after all, the capitalist's efforts to bring speedy prosperity to the estates were not so immoral as he had begun to suppose them. Not that he felt any less a dislike to the wholesale method of dealing with the old and settled population of Boulderstone. He had it even stronger than ever; but a comparison of practical methods showed him that what he had considered to be outrageous in the extreme was only the common expedient of "practical" men. Get the thing done, whatever it is, and never halt if there be any available means of doing it. That was the doctrine of practice he had perceived in action at Westlands. For himself he shrunk from it; but he had to admit that most men of affairs with whom he had come in contact recognized and acted on it.

After leaving the cellars, he stood for some time undecided in the room used by Mr. Frazer as a library. He knew no better way of being attended than to ring until some of the servants made their appearance. So he went on ringing until a footstep made itself audible in the distance. It was Mr. Frazer who answered the bell.

"I'm afraid you've been disturbed by the ringing," said Sir Neil, recognizing in the capitalist's gasp and pause and long scrutiny that he was in a state of dismay. "It's all right, Mr. Frazer. You thought I was drowned, I dare say. I meant to come round with the 'Petrel;' but, fortunately for me, I had to abandon that route and get north by train, and ride over from Humster."

Mr. Frazer advanced a step, seeing that the noumenal character of Sir Neil was disappearing. He had expected to find the butler, and to find him drunk, as he promised to be by his behavior during the day; it was the ringing which had brought him from his room.

But if you have made up your mind that a familiar figure has once for all disappeared from life, it is difficult to be at once reconciled to him when he steps briskly into view again without previous notice. Mr. Frazer went forward slowly to the fire-place, still scrutinizing anxiously the baronet's features.

"It beats everything I ever heard tell of," he at last exclaimed, as he held out his hand. "Man, I had a reward of fifty pounds out for your remains; and her ladyship and Caroline are very low with grief. You've put us all sadly about."

"Well, I can claim the reward in person. You see before you the remains of the defeated candidate for Westlands. But how are we to let Caroline and my mother know?"

"Lady Dutton was sore stricken; it will be well to relieve her mind at once. I will apprise my daughter myself."

Caroline had been sitting at her bedroom fire. Her maid was moving from the dressing-table to the back of the chair, where she was brushing out her mistress's long, brown tresses.

The girl was pale and silent, and she would not let her maid leave the room on any pretext. She was to sleep near her that night. But as yet, though it was long past her usual hour, she could not persuade herself to go to bed.

"I think, miss, if you would let me undress you it would be better than your sitting there. You'll make yourself ill thinking about it."

Caroline only removed her foot from the fender, and crossed one leg over another in an unconscious, masculine manner. But she made no reply for some time.

"I could take the least thing more brandy, Janie; I've had very little, and I believe it would make me sleep." Her maid brought her the stimulant; she drank it, and, looking into the fire, quietly said, "Janie, it's just as well as it is. I was getting quite frightened for him. He didn't understand me, and I didn't understand him. I am sure we would have been miserable if we had been married. Think what a nice man Mr. Brock is beside him."

"Oh, ma'am, he was a good master, too," said the maid, genuinely grieved at the supposed drowning of Sir Neil, and even shedding a tear or two in recollection of him.

"Yes, I dare say he was good enough, Janie. But, do you know, I think he got not to care about me, and I am sure I was getting not to care about him. His head was always so full of other things and people."

"But a man like him, miss, has to think of so much. Will you marry Mr. Brock, miss?" asked the maid, as she laid out the snowy vestments in which her mistress was to sleep.

"Janie, what a question to ask me! What would you think if I were to take him, though? Poor fellow! he's dreadfully in love with me. There's nobody has liked me half so well as Hew."

"There's such stories about him, ma'am."

"Well, I don't care anything about the stories. I like a man with a spice of the devil in him."

There came a gentle tap at the door, and Mr. Frazer's voice asked, "Have you gone to bed, Carry?"

"You mustn't come in yet, pap!" cried the girl, jumping from

her chair and making to a box behind her mirror, where she seized some confections to deodorize the spirits.

"Whatever brings him here, Jane, at this hour?" she asked in a whisper, carrying off a Bible to the fire-place and opening it at random.

"All right, papa, come in."

The maid stood behind her mistress, and her father stepped half-way across the room.

"Carry, the strangest thing has happened. I had to come and tell you myself."

"They have found the—" And the girl waited for her father to finish the sentence with "body," "corpse," "remains," or such other word as properly conveyed the meaning of the comforting discovery.

"Not at all," said he, his face wearing a happier expression than his daughter had seen on it for a long time. "Not at all. We were all wrong. He was never on board the 'Petrel.' He came the other way—he isn't drowned—he's well and alive, and on his legs down-stairs."

Caroline took some moments to realize what had actually occurred. Sir Neil was alive; he was not blotted out, and a new page of her history was to commence. She would yet have to marry him, cold, distant, intellectual, and priggish as he was. There was an end to her dear dream of marrying the Laird of Lobster Keep.

Caroline would have liked to faint; it would have suited all the circumstances of the case if she had fainted. But the announcement filled her with an acute indignation whose natural termination was not unconsciousness. Instead of leaning back in her chair and closing her long lids over her sweet brown eyes, she opened her mouth and gave a sharp, sustained scream of rebellion.

"No, no, no!" she cried, an angry crimson firing her features. "He has not come back; I will not believe it. He is dead, and I shall never see him again. Go away, papa! Don't speak to me."

"My dear Carry," said a man's voice at the door, in accents of reproachful tenderness. It was Sir Neil.

"Go away!" repeated the girl, her voice choked with anger, and turning, she rushed into the dressing-room where the maid was to sleep.

"Oh, sir, leave her to me; the news is too much for her. She's been nearly dead, sir, with grief and pain," said her maid, courtesying to the baronet, who was standing in the door-way. "I'm sure, sir, it's a delight to see you again."

The men went down-stairs, thankful for the affection which is stored up in the incomprehensible female breast.

Caroline lay across her maid's bed, and shed bitter tears of disappointment.

"Oh, it's too bad, and so it is," she sobbed, and paroxysm after paroxysm of her first real grief shook her little body.

"I believe she's in love this time," said the maid to herself, as she later on wrapped the coverlet tightly round her, Caroline having refused to undress or change her bed.

Sir Neil's meeting with his mother was a new revelation to him of her character.

She was first told of his return in a note he sent up to her. She had not gone to rest any more than the Frazers. Haunted with the idea that they would bring her son's body from the shore, she sat in her room apparently stolid and unsubdued by grief.

As she rose to meet him when he came forward there was a tenderness in her glance, a chastened rapture of expression in her dark eyes which was new to her.

"My boy, my boy!" she cried out, forgetting her dignity, her worldliness, and her calculation, and she wept freely as she pressed her brow to his shoulder. "Oh, I shall find relief now, my dear son."

It was the brightest part of the return for him, for though Mr. Frazer sat late, and, contrary to his custom, brewed himself several tumblers of toddy, and was chatty and happy, he let out some things in conversation that were far from consoling to the baronet. It was perhaps good to be told that the emigration schemes would probably come to something, but it was detestable to have it added that half Sandstone were in the caves. It was pleasant to know that the yield at the quarries was steadily on the increase, but it was not so nice to hear that threats of vengeance had been coming in from some of the men who had lost their babies by exposure in badly constructed sheds. It was an ominous thing that Mr. Frazer knew nothing by report or otherwise of Bertha St. Clair. Then the wreck of the "Petrel" had compensations for Mr. Frazer which the baronet could not see. To his certain knowledge, he said, as he ladled the last of his toddy from tumbler to glass, the destruction of the steamer would ruin half of the shop-keepers in the square. So much the better for his scheme of having one large distributing store.

And the drownings? Well, no doubt Captain Jansen was dead and gone. But sailors must expect to be drowned; and, after all, for a sailor, had he not a goodly spell of years?

CHAPTER XLII.

BERTHA BACK AGAIN.

A WEEK after the wreck of the "Petrel" John Jansen was laid in his grave outside the parish church. Such a funeral had not been remembered among the oldest inhabitants. The simplicity of the captain's life, his sweet temper, his benevolence, and the sad misfortune that brought him to the grave had raised the country-side. Sir Neil Dutton and Mr. Petersen stood close by each other when his coffin was lowered in silence—the impressive silence of a crowded church-yard, and the "he was a good man" of the minister, whispered as the clods fell, was all the eulogy, all the service he obtained. His death did for Bertha what the baronet on the eve of his return determined to do. Being told by Mr. Petersen that a boy had brought a letter from a sheeling up the country from the school-mistress, saying that she meant to return and to begin a school on her own account in the block of houses belonging to Jansen, which stood in the middle of the yard made by the capitalist on the fore-shore, Sir Neil felt that he could do little more for her. His sym-

pathy was all on her side—nay, something more; but he had determined to subdue the strong desire he had to see her, because his duty, as he conceived it, was so plainly to stand by his engagement to Caroline.

On the Sunday after Jansen's funeral he had been to the parish church, and had seen Bertha in her pew, with the flush of such loveliness in her face that he could with difficulty keep from staring at her. Mr. Petersen was evolving a doctrine of immortality from the principle of the conservation of forces, and his audience was as sleepy as it usually was when he vaulted into the unintelligible. His discourse would have done in a professorial room; it was "caviare" to most of his hearers in Boulderstone; and it was only when he lifted his manuscript, put it into his coat-pocket, and with many "hems" and "hahs" fronted his congregation and spoke of Captain Jansen in the fullness of his heart, that heads were raised from elbows and drowsy eyes began to sparkle. It was while Mr. Petersen spoke that Sir Neil, looking toward Bertha, determined that it was positive cowardice on his part not to see and talk to her. She was independent of his help; so much the better reason for congratulating her.

When he stepped out there were the usual Sunday groups standing round and talking in low voices. They hardly recognized him, though at his first arrival, and when great expectations were formed of him, he had been recognized by every one in turn at the church door. To such a state of incivility had the policy of the capitalist reduced his friends and tenants.

Bertha was walking by herself in a deserted corner of the graveyard. He must speak to her. Yes, in the face of Boulderstone, he must cross over to congratulate the girl on the change of circumstances which had recently come to her.

She was dressed in mourning; and standing as she was with her face half turned to the sea, he read the same wistful expression that had first struck him at the ferry. He was conscious of a throbbing heart as he moved among the crowded head-stones and approached her. He knew what this girl had come through; and there, in the face of the neighbors who had maligned her, she took her place so sweetly, tranquilly, and strongly.

"How much has happened since that morning!" he said, holding out his hand to her.

"Would it not have been better, Sir Neil, not to open up the past again?"

"Perhaps. But I had to tell you that I was called away suddenly, and that nothing has been done as I ordered."

Bertha was looking out toward the bar; the dismantled hull of the steamer was still the center of breaking waves, though the bay was smooth and blue. "He does not remember," she thought, "the death of my friend. He still thinks of his own troubles."

"Mr. Petersen has told me that you are now independent. Poor Captain Jansen! he could have done nothing better than leave you his fortune. You will find so much to do with it, and you will use it so well, if I may say so."

"I have been following the election at Westlands," said Bertha, after a pause, in which they were rather painfully aware that every

eye in the windows of the foreshore and among the groups of the congregation was turned toward them.

"Oh yes, and I have been well beaten at Westlands; but I hope I shall survive all the hard hitting."

"That part of your speeches where you talk of the rising sense of power in the masses interested me so much; and where you spoke of the inequality of human lots, and the gathering of wealth into a few hands, and of the duty of reformers to do what they can to stop the tendency and give fair chances to all."

"It was rather unpopular at Westlands. They called it communism. It cost me a number of votes; but I am very glad I said it, if it has your approval."

"But they were only words," said Bertha, half reproachfully; "could you not apply them to these?" and she pointed to the dismal huts of the foreshore. She was for a moment almost stern in the glance she gave him. "You who know—why should you stand by while others do what you detest? You have heard of Sandstone. Half of Sandstone is in the caves, and their old, old homes are broken up. The other half will be there soon, if it is all true that they expect. Sir Neil, you can not, I know, help the persecution which has begun, but you can denounce it."

"You make light of my difficulties," said Sir Neil, uncomfortably. "I have told you that Mr. Frazer is the proprietor, and that I am a mere spectator in a home which is not my own."

"We can not say more, then. But be warned, Sir Neil, in time. That rising sense of power you talk of in your speeches is awakening at your door, and who can say what may not happen? Look at your tenants; they do not acknowledge your presence among them, because not one of them knows when he may be asked to take himself off to the other side of the world. And there, on the foreshore, my friends that I have known and loved for years are talking bitterly against you. And it is this overturning of all they have been used to by a man bent on gathering wealth, and caring nothing for the distress he spreads on the way. I begin to fear that you may be made the victim."

"And what do you propose to do?" he asked, turning aside her warnings by a query.

"For me, everything has been arranged. I have opened my school, and all my pupils have come back to me. I have inherited all Captain Jansen's means, and I shall have to spend them for the lasting good of these—" again pointing to the foreshore, as if the people were her children. "I was very foolish for a little, and thought I would give it all up. I rushed to the moors and believed I was done with it; but no, the breath of them revived me, and again I see my way. But, dear sir," she continued, looking at him piteously, "why is it that the work *he* has left me to do," pointing to the grave of Captain Jansen, "must be in antagonism to you? Dearly should I love to help the people with the guidance you could give; for I am weak, and feel my weakness, and your words at Westlands tell me that you are strong, and that you know how they should be guided to a better destiny."

"I can stay the reforms, so called, on the estates; I will stay them. Believe me, they have been sprung upon me; and I foresaw

nothing of what has occurred under Frazer's management. To make the people free and prosperous where they are, instead of driving them to the doubtful freedom and prosperity of a new clime—that, I assure you, has been my aim, and it has been thwarted by circumstances and the strong will of a man who, in the South, has only one reputation—friend of the people.” There was a pause for a moment, and in a lower voice he asked her beseechingly, “Bertha, may I not call on you again?”

“No, our ways lie apart. In my distress I appealed to you, and you were kind—oh, more than kind. But there must be an end to it all. Here only are we safe.”

“I have still much to say to you.”

“It must not be.”

“But you tell me that I can advise you. Is it so?”

“Advise me by letter. And first think of what I have said to you. The people are rising; they will throw off by some desperate act the new tyranny which is depriving them of their homes. But Mr. Petersen is coming to us.” And the minister advancing toward them, the conversation took a new turn.

CHAPTER XLIII.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

ONCE a year, just before the harvest commenced, the town of Boulderstone drew to itself the active population of the side of the country on which it lay.

It was the market-day-in-chief for the year, and the square from morning till night was thronged with farm-servants and farmers, who surged and eddied in ceaseless circles round the booths and stalls which had been erected for their convenience and delectation. If you had been on the highway leading from the inland farms and hamlets at earliest dawn of the day, you would have seen robust women, with gaudy petticoats tucked up to their knees, tramping on bare, red feet, their shoes dangling from their arms.

Sometimes there were companies of them, and as they walked they chattered freely, played pranks one on another, and turned up their faces to the passing gig or cart to exchange a coarse joke with the genial male who might be driving. To-day they were to stand in the market-place until they were accosted; they were then to hire themselves out for the next term to the farmers and “grieves” who engaged them.

They were naturally in a high state of excitement. In their lives the feeing market took rank with such incidents as births, deaths, or marriages. On the roads, too, there were companies of well-dressed males, plowmen mostly, in black cloth jackets and well-scoured moleskin breeches, bound on the same mission as the women.

The farmers and crofters for the most part drove, and arrived later in the day. Everybody, however, was there.

The square on each side was lined with stalls. There were few things which the rustic imaginations had conceived in the way of

hardware, confectionery, or jewelry which the stalls could not dispense at a price suited to the condition of their purses. Confectionery, however, impressed the eye most of all. It was piled up in solid pyramids, which, as the day went by, disappeared, scoopful after scoopful, down the unfathomable pockets of the women. Sugar, in all the various molds and colors it can assume, was the great marketable commodity of the day. "Penny an ounce! penny an ounce! hi—i—i—i, hi—i—i—i, penny an ounce!" shouted huckster after huckster, scoop in the air, as the round, rosy faces and stalwart bodies elbowed their way among the stalls, breathing a general atmosphere of peppermint, toffy, and cloves as they went.

"The queen's spurs. Her royal 'ighness's spurs, as worn by her at the marriage of her eldest son."

So said a small, withered man, with a prominent nose, from among a heap of unsalable folios and old garments forming the least attractive stall in the square. It was old Moses Jacob, known in the market for many years, who had always been selling "the queen's spurs" in a shaky voice, but who had never been understood to find a purchaser.

"Them's the little canaries as sings to the tune of twenty shillings," said a keen, razor faced man in brassy tones, shaking a bag of sovereigns from a platform, and pouring out the golden stream into his hand, while a throng of plowmen watched him with open mouths.

"Them's the little canaries, and I gives 'em away, for I'm a bit of a philanthropist, I am. I gives 'em away, I gives 'em away."

The philanthropist then seized a watch, offered it for a pound, and the bargain not being to the mind of any of the spectators, filled it with sovereigns, shut it, and again offered. And watch after watch was handed down and paid for, the dupes being too much ashamed to tell their neighbors that they had been "done."

"Walk up, gentlemen and ladies, walk up!" yelled a painted harlequin from the wooden steps of a caravan and tent, amid the deafening beat of cymbals and drums; "the performance is now going on, and includes, among many rare natural phenomenons, the man who can walk on a rope upside down; the tender mother who has given birth to triplets, and feeds 'em all at once; the singing boa-constrictor, and the pony which laughs. Hi—i—i—i. Walk up, ladies and gentlemen."

A little further along two rifles with brass barrels went on crackling throughout the day, while the buckster who owned the shooting-saloon roared the invitation, "Hi—i—i—i, nuts for your money, and sport for nothing. Hi—i—i—i."

Early in the day, and throughout the afternoon, there was the utmost good-humor. The crowd was still at the confectionery stage of the proceedings. They were making their engagements with the farmers, and until they were completed it was deemed high enough festival to munch lozenges and chew gingerbread.

After the engagements there came whisky and strong ale, the crowning enjoyment of the day to men and women who for the rest of the year were fed without alcohol.

But to-day some of the men had begun drinking early. It was noticeable that much sooner than usual there were lads with tangled

heads and disheveled shirt-fronts, with red eyes and staggering gait, knocking from corner to corner in the streaming, surging market place. And at an hour when "Cheap Jack" was usually doing a brisk trade he had to bundle up his remaining watches, leap into a dog-cart, and escape across the country from the vengeance of his dupes. At last the crowd seemed to be diverted from the hundred different objects in the windows, booths, and stalls by the appearance of a great green cloth, with gilt letters in the center, which was being hung from the Town Hall at the end of the square.

"Prosperity," "Contentment," "Honor," "Old Age," were glittering in the corners; "Emigration" was emblazoned in large type in the middle.

As the cloth was let down from the windows a rush was made toward the hall, and in a few moments a dense multitude was staring at the announcement with blank, inexpressive faces. At the same moment showers of hand-bills, with "Brisbane, Brisbane, Brisbane," appealing to the eye in large letters, fell among the crowd, while were handed round invitations to the lecture which was to be delivered within the hall that evening on the subject of Australian emigration.

The interest attaching to the advertisement soon exhausted itself. Being once hung on the walls, it took no other shape to itself, and the crowd in its collective capacity could make nothing of the phrases, "Prosperity," "Contentment," "Honor," and "Old Age."

They were still staring at it when a more active interest was excited by the number of missiles it began to attract from one of the stalls, from which a tall farmer, more than half drunk, was throwing gingerbread, soft sweetmeats, and whatever he could lay his hands on.

Roars of laughter greeted this practical joke. The figure of the farmer was well known to the crowd, and it was whispered about, "Ormly's game for onything noo; he's had his allooance o' drink."

Ormly stood head and shoulders over the crowd, which was a tall one. The laughter subsided when the soft contents of the stall were taken out of his reach. He then got up on the stall itself, and waving his arms, began to speak.

"Emigration! They ca' it emigration. Damn them! Dinna believe them, lads. We're putten oot by main force. And here I am this day without a fairm tae my back or hoose tae my family; an' hoo mony o' ye lads are stannin' there withoot engagements? An' why? Because the leases are fa'in in, an' it'll no pay tae engage ye for the new proprietor—no' Sir Neil; I'll no blame the laddie; he's his faither's son; but the ither fallow frae the Sooth, a merchant oot o' a toon, wi' nae idea o' fairmin' at a'—the new proprietor wants to lump the land in his ain hauns."

At that moment the stall rocked beneath the huge farmer, and he was dragged down by "Lang Geordie," a policeman as tall as himself. Ormly only disappeared for a moment—the next he was struggling with his opponent, the center of a surging group of men similarly aggrieved, and only too anxious to find a victim. "Lang Geordie" went out of sight among their feet, kicked silent beneath

the stall, and Ormly, his broad shoulders and flaxen hair looming above the mob, fought his way toward the jail.

"To the jile, lads, to the jile!" was the cry raised; and behind Ormly there was a crushing aside of the peaceably inclined, who wanted to take no hand in a riot, and a filling-in of the turbulent, who were much in the mood for breaking heads.

The jail was not a very formidable institution, and under the leadership of Ormly the mob had not far to go.

One corner of the "jile" overlooked the square; the lowest of its well-barred windows could be reached from the pavement behind the show, where the harlequin was still crying between the beating of the cymbals and the drum, "Hi—i—i—i, walk up, ladies and gentlemen."

"Comin'! comin'!" shouted Ormly, brandishing the pole of a stall on which he had laid hands, and the market cleared before him as he advanced, all the younger men in the square rushing up to back him.

But the officials inside the jail were wary; the great door was shut and double-barred from within before Ormly, pole in hand, had led the rioters up to it.

The farmer belabored the door with his pole, but without result.

Ormly turned to the square, where a sea of faces was watching him, and exclaiming, "There's Magnus in't, an' there's Sandstone lads in't; an' if we dinna free them wi' oor ain hands they'll rot in't for a' the justice they'll get. Oot o' my rodd," he continued, looking from the prison door to the square, and striding forward to a huge wagon, which had carried the tent and household gods of a performing company. "A hand, lads!" and applying his back to the wagon, he pushed it into the square.

Harlequin looked down from his platform, and for the moment lost his sense of humor—he owned the wagon. Dropping his appeal to the public to "walk up," he came down and abused the farmer.

Ormly put his thumb and forefinger inside the belt of spangles which encircled him; he performed an involuntary somersault back to his platform, which elicited more laughter than any thing he had done during the day.

"Clear the way, noo," shouted the farmer; "twa three dizzen o' ye! put your strength to this." And drawing the wagon back into the square, a hundred hands pushed the big machine. It moved, it ran, it rushed, and with a crack like thunder it was driven against the jail door.

In another moment the high shoulders and flaxen hair of Ormly were leading into the cells; a few minutes later the Sandstone pilot was passed shoulder-high across the crowd.

From the door of a neighboring tavern a great tankard of foaming ale was handed to Ormly, and draining it out, he again addressed the crowd,

"Magnus's free, but whaur's the man that jiled him? Brock o' the Keep's i' the toon, an' he maun answer for his conduct. We'll sit in joodgment on him an' his frien' the Sooth-country merchant. Awa', lads, an' fin' Brock!"

"He's at Swanson's inn!" shouted several voices: "we seen him there half an hour ago, drinkin' at the window."

And Ormly leading, again the angry mass headed toward the hotel, while thin streams of boys made off by lanes and across garden walls to be at the hotel in good time for the sport.

All along the route timid shopkeepers put up their shutters and barred their doors; the Town Hall was entered by a crowd of yokels, who stood at the open windows throwing out the evergreens and decorations, the cake and fruit, and lastly the crockery and plates which had been collected for the evening's entertainment. The green cloth, with "Emigration" in the center, was torn down by a host of eager hands.

But the yelling crowd had come a little too late for the Laird of Lobster Keep. He had left the hotel. He had been seen riding to Boulderstone Castle.

"To the castle! to the castle!" was the next cry; and still led by the tall farmer, the irregular host, numbering several hundred, and brandishing shepherds' crooks, canes, whips, and barrel staves, clattered over the hard road.

Down to the river, across the bridge, round by the meadows, which the river covered at high tide, they rushed helter-skelter, rending the air with their shouts and the iron clatter of their hard heels.

The park wall was low toward the high-road; Ormly vaulted across it, and a score of men leaped behind him; while the remainder, on their hands and knees, tumbled after them.

The sheep which were nibbling the grass of the park were scattered before them like white clouds before a high wind. Long before they approached the castle, figures had been moving in and out, and as they broke upon the drive in front of the house their hoarse voices, caught in the echoes of the turreted roof, rang back on them and redoubled the angry roar.

Ormly, still grasping the pole of the stall, which had been again put into his hands after Magnus's release, was leading toward the door when the tall slender figure of Sir Neil appeared on the steps. He had no hat on his head. He was pale, but in his dark eyes and closed lips there was no look of hesitation, only of firmness, dashed by a little indignation.

For the first time since the fever of riot had kindled in their veins the mass was confronted with an object which arrested its attention and made it pause.

As the baronet came down another step and cast his eyes over them they closed up, and with their red faces, steaming heads, and open mouths, fell suddenly silent before him. Even Ormly, with his seven feet of stalwart flesh, began to finger his pole uneasily, as if this was not what he had come out to do battle with.

"To-morrow you will be sorry for this, my friends," said Sir Neil, quietly, but in a persuasive, sad tone, which reached the outermost men of the crowd. "You have broken into my grounds rudely, pursuing a single man. One, two, perhaps three hundred of you pursuing a single man."

"Dinna be feared, sir; it's no' you. It's Brock o' the Keep we want," said Ormly, a little sheepishly.

"Fear! Who talks of fear? I have no fear. But I have cause to be angry with you, and I am angry. You—the men of the North Country, who understand fair-play, hunt a single man until he has to take refuge in my house. And to the insult of it you add the injury of coming to a house where there are women, with your poles and staves and shouts of vengeance."

"Ca' canny, sir," responded the big leader. "We're no' here for nothin'. Come forward, Magnus. D'ye see that man? He's been driven to the jile, and his wife's in childbed amang the caves. An' what for? For a whimsy o' Brock's. An' look at me. I kent your faither, an' my faither held frae your grandfather, an' noo I have nae hoose abune my head nor fairm tae my back. An' what for? A whimsy o' Frazer's!"

"Oot wi' Brock! oot wi' Brock!" shouted several voices.

"He shall not be sent out," said Sir Neil, in the same quiet, firm voice; "and any man who attempts to enter this door to bring him out shall walk over my body."

Ormly lowered his pole, and cracking it across his knee, advanced, cap in hand, to the young man.

"Odds, sir, it's a' my doin'. An' ye hev the stuff o' yer forbears in ye; an' ye maunna blame the boys. But we're just clean gyte wi' thae improvements, and the threetenin's an' the emigration."

"I know it," answered Sir Neil, shaking hands with the chief rioter. "My friends, follow me in this direction, and you shall tell me your grievances, and I shall tell you what I think may be done for them."

And the mob, headed by Ormly and Sir Neil, walked toward the home farm.

CHAPTER XLIV.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

MR. FRAZER had seen the full rage of the market-place from a small room in the Town Hall, where, unknown to the men who invaded the platform and destroyed the crockery, he had at an early stage of the proceedings taken refuge, not without considerable alarm.

Finding the storm go past, after a time he thought he might safely go out by a back door, reach the river-mouth, and hail his yacht. On board it he would be safe, or if safety were not in the question he would at least be on the way to the castle.

But while he was slowly making up his mind to this course an event of some importance was occurring at the castle.

Brock's arrival there was soon followed by messengers from Swanson's inn to say that he would be in danger in the castle, for Ormly was in drink, and was following him, and could make the mob do anything he liked.

The Laird of Lobster Keep was in an intelligible state of alarm. He had heard before he had taken the horse from the hotel that the jail had been broken into; and Magnus being liberated, he had a wholesome fear of being within arm's-length of him again. One encounter had already told him the force that was contained in it;

he rightly dreaded another. But on his arrival at the castle Sir Neil had been so certain that the rioters would not follow him thither that he stood pooh-poohing the event with his scared guest before his dining-room fire. He had too much faith in his people to believe them capable of anything of the sort. It was a premature alarm—Brock might depend upon that.

By the time Ormly was leading the crowd across the park, however, it became evident that something must be done.

"I shall meet them face to face," he told Brock, "and argue the matter with them. If you like to take your chance of staying in the castle you shall have all the protection it can give you."

Meanwhile he had warned the servants to keep to the kitchen, and go on with their usual employments without a man or woman of them stirring. And Caroline he had bidden join his mother until the riot was at an end.

After that he went out and met them single-handed, confident of his success.

Brock had seen too much of the people during the day to believe that the castle would give him protection. No sooner had Sir Neil left than he began pacing the room in an agony of nervous terror.

Caroline came back, closing the door behind her; she shivered a little, and going to Brock, put her hand on his shoulder.

"Now or never, Hew; you must fly or they'll kill you. And you must take me with you."

Her speech seemed to arrest the progress of his anxiety; the love he had for her, such as it was, gave him a momentary courage.

"Fly! What's the good of you flying? They won't touch you even if they come inside. It's me and your father they want".

"But, Hew, I'm ready to go to the end of the world with you; and if they are to kill you they may as well kill me too."

"But if I fled you would just be a hinderance. By God, I think I would be safer to hide in the wine-cellar."

"You would get drunk, and make such a noise that they would discover you in no time," said Caroline; "and if you are to fly it must be now or never," she added, as the first yells of the rioters became audible. "This way, Hew," she cried, leading toward the Gothic library.

And they escaped together from the window, while the roar of the voices was penetrating the castle behind them. He put himself under her care, and clad as she was, in her light dress, without hat or cloak, she hurried him to the river-side.

"But—where—are—you—going to?" he panted.

"To the yacht;" and she stopped for a moment at the edge of the sea-wall before they crossed the beach. "You will take me to the Orkneys, Hew, right off."

"You're a clever one!"

"And we'll never come back here again, Hew."

"And if ever we do come back, it'll be as Mr. and Mrs. Hew Brock, Carry."

"You're the clever one this time."

The beach was deserted, but on board the yacht, which lay at anchor in the middle of the stream, there were three or four men looking over the side idly.

As Brock and Caroline stepped over the bowlders they understood that something unusual had happened. Two of them at once came ashore in a dingy.

"The skipper's up the toon, sir, an' half the crew, an' it's lookin' gray-like ower the broo o' the hill. We'll hae a stiff win' the nicht."

This was said in disparagement at the order that they must lift their anchor and run. But they pushed off, nevertheless, and five minutes later the yacht was dropping down the stream, short-handed, without a captain, and with two fugitives on the way to the nearest sheriff, who would unite them by an irregular marriage.

It was not yet dark when Mr. Frazer, who had made a long circuit to get to the river-mouth unobserved, stood below the Brae-head, and descried the jib and main-sail of the yacht swelling out at the bar.

He stood for a long time looking after the little vessel, uneasy in his mind. Then he heard a noise of voices at the castle. Was the yacht then carrying the family out for safety? He eyed the turrets, half expecting to see a column of smoke and a red tongue of flame shooting up from them. But no, they had not fired the castle yet at any rate.

Standing there in the dusk he was more unhappy than he ever remembered himself to have been for years. He had not contemplated the idea of an enraged community taking the law in its own hand, and rising up in wrath to repudiate him and his schemes. As he stood, cut off from the castle, unable to pass through the town, with a feeling that escaped criminals might be lurking in the neighborhood, all the importance oozed out of him. He did not even remotely think of the hundred and one undertakings and the banker's account, which elsewhere, and in other circumstances, made him so notable a figure. He was more humble at the moment than he ever, by an effort of will, could make himself, with a Bible in his hand and the whites of his eyes turned toward heaven, during his devotions of the morning and evening.

Presently some voices approached. It was only one or two fishermen taking their last seat for the evening; but he did not know that it might not be somebody in pursuit of himself. Unconsciously he bent himself to the earth, and skirted the silent side of the Brae-head as fast as his legs could carry him in that humble attitude.

Round by the Whale's Head he passed as quickly as he could move; he would make for his friend, the Free Church minister's, he said to himself, remembering that his house fronted the river, but might be reached by a nearer lane.

As he sped round the walls of the little inn an access of nervousness came upon him; the invisible enemy he was hurrying from seemed to be at his back. Hurrying across the yard, for the building of which he had pulled down so many houses, he reached the lane without being observed.

Without halt or pause he stepped out toward his friend's house, when, of a sudden, a great shouting arose in a neighboring lane. The dread of danger was so strong upon him that his knees trembled, and he felt as if an hour of violence, which must end in death, were coming upon him. He had advanced far up the lane; there were drunken rioters ahead of him.

For one moment he thought he was entrapped, and that from two points they were making upon him. He looked up and down the lane; they were certainly closing in on each side. In desperation he pushed a door open and found himself within Captain Jansen's garden, where he had been once before. Bertha St. Clair was at the porch.

"Come in," she said to him, gravely. "These are troubled times, but you are safe here."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE NEW LIFE.

NEXT day Mr. Frazer, bidding the baronet a brief farewell, and carrying with him a little penciled note from Caroline, which told him she would return to him as the wife of Mr. Hew Brock, drove across the country never to go back again. He felt after that climax to his negotiations that the sooner he was done with his great Boulderstone experiment the better for him and his future. A day or two later he knew that Caroline would never return to him; the yacht had been broken on the Sandstone rocks the very night it had crossed the bar of the river. It was explained to him that on the fated night a drunken light-house man had forgotten to keep his lamp in order. One seaman, who climbed up the face of the cliffs, was the sole survivor of the wreck.

* * * * *

After the riot, Lady Dutton asked to be taken back to the Riviera. It was a bitter disappointment to her that the cherished plans of a year, for which she had undergone so much inconvenience, should so miserably break down.

Caroline, poor child, was deceitful, she told her son, and might have been troublesome in after-life; but it was quite too shocking an end, even for one who broke her engagement and eloped with a man who had so little taste and refinement as the late Mr. Hew Brock. It was consoling, however, to know that no new embarrassments were likely to accrue; for though Mr. Frazer's connection with the estate was severed, and his mortgages transferred to the hands of a banking corporation, no exceptional pressure was to be brought to bear upon her son. She was, indeed, enabled to support a *ménage* in the Riviera suited to her position and taste. Once established there, she had no more desire, she said, to return to London for the season, or to Edinburgh for the exercise of her patronage. The Riviera, Switzerland, and the option of falling back upon Paris when she chose, would stand, she believed, between her and *ennui* for the remainder of her days.

* * * * *

The riot passed over Boulderstone like a storm. Like a storm which brings death in its wake, it solemnized the community and intensified the stillness of the town life.

But after "the gentry" left the castle there was an end to the

suppressed excitement which had been gathering for so many months.

One by one the tall posters which pointed the way to the antipodes were taken down from the gables and walls. On the cliffs, close to Sandstone, the pilots went back to their houses, having thatched them anew, so that the seals and otters had the run of the caves once more.

"Roups," which had freely been announced among the farm steadings, were postponed and stopped altogether; and the Town Council at one of its meetings discussed at great length the project of a railway, which, while it promised to bring employment to hundreds, would not have a disturbing effect upon leases.

There were many who could not conceive Boulderstone as capable of invasion by the steam-horse.

The "Buckie," with new and special information about the gap on the other side of the county, decried the scheme in fine alliterative prose, declaring that its readers were content to remain "the proud and peculiar people of the North."

The removal of Mr. Frazer from the scene might not inaptly be compared to the withdrawal of a stranger from the neighborhood of an ant's nest, into which he had curiously and laboriously been thrusting his stick.

* * * * *

Sir Neal Dutton called upon Bertha St. Clair after he had taken his mother to Italy. The last view he had of Bertha before going away was from the foreshore. She was laying flowers upon the grave of her benefactor, and the baronet did not at the moment feel entitled to disturb her.

He was in Italy longer than he anticipated; but it brought him no peace of mind. Inconsolable he wandered among the citron hedges and the palm groves of Bordighera. What was the golden light of that shore to him compared to the fall of the breakers from the North Sea behind the windows of Boulderstone? Bitter as had been many of his experiences in the home of his fathers; tragic as had been the end of his connection with the Frazers, there were other memories of a sweeter sort which linked him to the castle, and one day, late in the year, they drew him back to Boulderstone.

His first visit was made to Bertha. She was still in the house Captain Jansen had left her, and the town paid her the respect which was due to an injured heiress.

She was feeding the bees at the moment Jean Scott, courtesying gravely, let Sir Neil Dutton into the garden.

Oscar and Fidget were anxiously regarding her from a little distance, as she stooped to insert the trays of syrup which, in the absence of sunshine and flowers, kept the bees alive.

Sir Neil went down the crisp, frosted walk, and, leaning on the beehouse, shook off a shower of icicles, which fell like diamond spray round the figure of Bertha.

Then he talked to her of the riot and the change it had made; how he had promised his tenants to rescind all that had been done hurtful to their interests by Mr. Frazer, and how he meant to stay among his people until prosperity had come back. But he would

need help. No—her property could not help him very much. But did she remember what he had said to her one eventful morning when the dawn saw them stepping from the castle to the river?

She could never, of course, forget that.

Did she believe that it was all much more true at that moment than it was on the eventful morning?

She believed it.

And could she accept poverty among these gray turrets that were visible from the bee-house—temporary poverty, it was to be hoped—while they wrought together to help the foreshore to larger prosperity and the hamlets to a new peace, and themselves to a happier, and, with Heaven's help, perhaps to a better life?

She had done feeding the bees, and it was all said so quietly that not the keenest neighbors could have told they were saying anything more than "How do you do?"

Just at the moment Bertha could not find words to answer him.

But the Rev. Mr. Petersen not very long after, when she was beneath the bridal veil, exacted an answer which was quite satisfactory to Sir Neil Dutton, for she was married from the cottage the captain had left her, and the honeymoon was spent in the country somewhere.

The first Sunday when the new Lady Dutton stepped from her carriage at the gate of the parish church, and the crowd of tenants and townsfolk parted on either side to make way for her and her husband, there was such a smiling and courtesying as had never been remembered there before. And the minister, taking his text from the song of Solomon, pelted them with a theological bouquet which compelled Bertha to keep her eyelids down all through the sermon. But Sir Neil looked him straight in the face, just as if he had been practicing for a christening, as the grave-digger said to Sandy Harold afterward; and Sandy, with less regret in his tone than might have been supposed, observed that "the aik that was to box the baronet and his ledly wasna cut yet."

THE END.

JAMES PYLE'S

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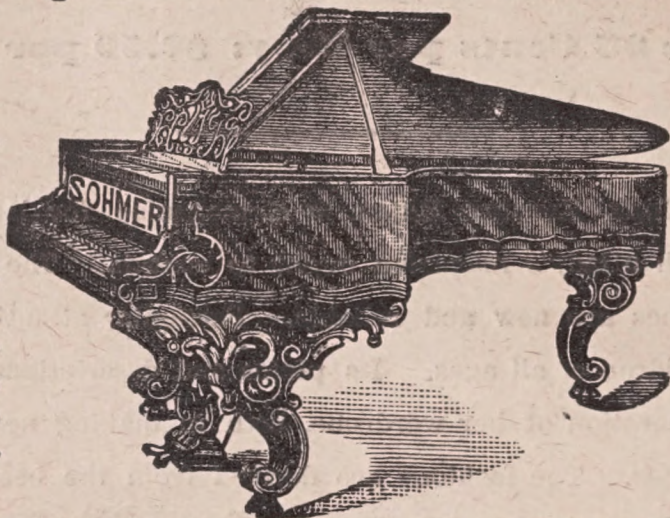
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